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THE

SECOND PART

OF

Mr. *CLAUDE's*

ANSWER

TO

Monsieur *de MEAUX's* BOOK,

INTITULED,

A Conference with Mr. CLAUDE, &c.

CONTAINING

An Examination of M. *de Meaux's* Thirteen Reflections on a Writing of Mr. *Claude's*.

LONDON:
Printed for *T. Dring*, at the *Harrow* in *Fleetstreet*,
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TO THE
READER.

HAving already in an Advertiſement before the First Part, endeavoured to obviate ſuch Scruples as might ſeem with any appearance of Reaſon to be raiſed againſt this Tranſlation, I hope there will be no occaſion ſo far to diſtruſt either the Reader's Ingenuity, or the ſatisfactorineſs of what was there offered, as to enlarge any further in my own and the Books vindication.

I confeſs it was once in my thoughts, from ſome paſſages in Mr. Claude *concerning the Right of the Miniſtry inherent in the Faithful, and the firſt Paſtors of the Reformation, to ſay ſomewhat that might ſhew the advantagious and unexceptionable methods made uſe of by the Church of* England, *in her Separation from the* Romiſh *Communion; And I imagined I had drawn a ſort of obligation upon my ſelf to do ſo, by aſſerting in my former Advertiſement, That* As many as underſtand the difference between us and the Reformed Proteſtants in *France*, are ſenſible we ſtand upon the better ground by much, for an engagement againſt the Church of *Rome*.

But beſides, that the proſecution of ſuch a Deſign would have ſwelled this Treatiſe to an inconvenient bigneſs, which is already of a bulk beyond what I expected, by reaſon of the multitude and length of Quotations; beſides, that this hath been done by better hands ſo fully and ſo frequently as might ſatisfy all that are not reſolved never to be ſatisfied with any thing; I found the trouble happily ſuperceded by what Mr. Claude *himſelf hath done in the buſineſs, when he undertakes to examine M.* de Meaux's *Thirteenth Reflection. Where in anſwer to his fourth Objection,* Whence came their Paſtors, *&c? He tranſcribes what he had formerly written to this purpoſe, in his Defence of the Reformation. Which Book, whoever ſhall take the pains to conſult, will find, that the paſſage conſidered whole and entire, amounts to thus much, That, if ſome places choſe (as 'tis acknowledged they did chuſe) Paſtors of their own heads, yet the neceſſity of the*

Vid. Defenſe de la Reform. Part. 4. Ch. 1.

the times forcing them to the use of such an Expedient, and the general Approbation these Persons so elected met with, as also Gods blessing upon their endeavours, make abundant recompence for what can be thought irregular in such proceedings: But withal, that this Imputation of Irregularity cannot affect the whole Body, no, nor the most considerable part of the Reformers, because in most Countries the Clergy themselves were exceeding sensible, how necessary a Reformation was, and laboured with a Zeal proportionable to that Sense, in the promoting it. Hereupon, several places, in the head of which England *and* Scotland *are reckoned particularly, reformed with the Consent and Concurrence of the majority of their then Clergy. And from thence to this day, they do retain a continued ordinary Succession of Ministers, without Interruption, Innovation, or any recourse to an extraordinary Call or Constitution. All the inference I make from this at present, is only to observe, how little credit that Fable of the* Nags-head-*Consecration hath found abroad, and what an unparallel'd confidence those men are endued with, who still endeavour to obtrude upon us a Fiction of their own, in despight of common Sense, publick Records, and all the most authentick Evidence that any thing of that nature can possibly be capable of.*

The Quotations in this Second Part, have cost me a great deal of Pains to search and transcribe, which I hope will be granted to have been done faithfully; and where any are wanting, it is either, because the Books referred to, could not be met with, or where there was no danger of Falsification, as when Mr. Claude *quotes his own Writings. The reason why I mention this, is thereby to bespeak the Readers Equity and Candor, that in consideration of so much care, he will rather impute such Errors as shall occur in the Translation it self, to Ignorance and want of Judgment, than to any Insincerity, or a design of imposing upon the World.*

THE

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M. *de* MEAUX's REFLECTIONS Relating to the CONFERENCE, EXAMINED.

The first Reflection, concerning the Submission we promise to the decisions of our National Synods, Examined.

HAving already spoken sufficiently to M. *de Meaux* his Reflections upon my Answer to his Discourse; The next thing in order, is, That we proceed to those which have a Relation to the Conference between us. The subject of the first is, That Submission and Obedience which we promise to our National Synods, as it occurs in our Discipline, in these words; † *We promise in the presence of God to submit our selves to whatever shall be concluded and resolved upon in your holy Assembly, being perswaded, as we verily are, that God will preside in it, and lead you by his holy Spirit into all truth and equity, by the Rule of his Word, for the Good and Edification of his Church, and to his own great Glory.*

† *These words are the form of a missive Letter composed in the Synod of* Vitré, *for the Provinces to follow, when they send Deputies to a National Synod.* Nous promettons devant Dieu de nous soûmettre à tout ce qui sera conclu, & resolu en vôtre sainte Assemblée, y obéir, et l' executer de nostre pouvoir, persuadez que nous sommes que Dieu y presidera, et vous conduira par son Saint Esprit, en toute verité, et equité, par la regle de sa parole, pour le bien et l' edification de son Eglise, et à sa grande gloire. Discipline. Chap. 9. Observ. pag. 144. Huisseau Edit. *Genev.* 1666.

This Act M. *de Meaux* made use of in the Conference between us, and inferred from it, that an absolute Obedience was a thing so mighty necessary in the Church, that even we our selves, contrary to our own principle, were constrained to acknowledg, and advance it in practice. The answer made to that was, That this promise could not be lookt upon as any other than a conditional one, that is, it supposed the Synod should do its duty, and in matters of Faith, judge and determine according to the Word of God. But this Prelate not relishing that explanation very well, hath thought fit to touch upon this matter again, and endeavour to perswade us these two things: One, that in sight of all we can say to the business, and how loth soever we may be to have it so, our submission in truth is absolute, and unconditional, without restraint or reserve. The other, that if we understand any limitation or condition in it, our Oath is no better than a ridiculous illusion, an equivocation, and such a mental reservation as is unbecoming any honest men.

The first of these he grounds upon six Observations: 1. That there was some opposition made in the Provinces, before they could settle this Submission. 2. That a National Synod at *Tonneins* enjoyned this Submission to be promised in proper terms, without any Condition or Modification. 3. That the Discipline calls the judgment of these Synods, even in doctrinal points, *the last and final resolution*, in which, if men refuse to acquiesce, it appoints, *that they shall be cut off from the Church.* 4. That the like submission is not promised among us, neither to the judgment of Consistories, nor Colloquies, nor even of Provincial Synods. 5. That the National Synod of *Rochel* declared this clause of Submission to be necessary to the validity of the Assemblies Conclusions. 6. Lastly, That a bare humane presumption, such as we profess to have of a National Synods integrity, cannot be *the matter and foundation of an Oath.* From all which he infers, that our submission is absolute, and that it is very impertinent in us to go about to understand it with conditions and exceptions, and to reserve to our selves still a right of examining things afterwards.

But all this is of no moment at all: For, as for the first of these Remarks, M. *de Meaux* magnifies things a great deal more than he ought to do. The truth of it is, there was in the Provinces not any opposition, as he terms it, but some of them were negligent, and did not insert that Clause of Submission in their Letters of Deputation, and others varied in their manner of expressing it. This put the Synod of *Vitre*, held in the year 1617. upon compoling the form which we have related here, to be constantly and unanimously observed throughout all the Provinces. Here is nothing in all this, but what is very natural, and

and very usual, nothing that savours of quarrel or opposition, nothing that M. *de Meaux* can make the least advantage of.

As to the second; when the National Synod of *Tonneins* appointed this Submission and Obedience to be promised in proper terms, without any condition or modification; this was not in such a manner as M. *de Meaux* fancies, with a design to exclude that condition of judging agreeably to the Word of God, but it was intended for provision against the two inconveniencies I mentioned just now; The neglect some Provinces were guilty of, in omitting this clause of submission, and a sort of fantastical diversity in others, some of which instanced in those conditions and modifications, and others took no notice at all of them. This forced the Synod to appoint on one hand, that the submission should be promised in proper and express terms, with regard to the former inconvenience; and on the other hand, that they should not mention in particular, either Condition, or Modification, in relation to the second. But, as for that Condition of following the Word of God in decisions that concern matters of Faith; this is so naturally understood, and, according to the constant Tenet of *Protestants*, is so essentially annexed to every promise of submission, that there was not any necessity of expressing it.

The third observation hath as little of weight and solidity in it as the two former: For 'tis very true, that in the order of Discipline, the determination of a National Synod is the last and final resolution, and that there is not beyond that any humane remedy that can be made use of, for the reducing persons that we think have gone astray; so that it is no wonder sentence should be given against them as obstinate Hereticks, and that they should be excommunicated. But as I said in the Conference, the Excommunication is just, only upon supposal, that that determination was according to the Word of God; and if that supposition be not true, the Excommunication rebounds back upon the Excommunicators themselves: So that when a point of Doctrine is in question, we must not imagine the Synod Excommunicates gainsayers, purely upon this account, that they did not submit their Consciences to their Authority, This is the way that the Church of *Rome* takes; but it excommunicates them for their hardning their hearts against the Word of God, which hath been abundantly demonstrated, and made sufficiently clear to them, by all the humane means that can in reason be made use of for that purpose. And to conclude from thence, that our submission to a National Synod is absolute, and unconditional, without distinction, and without exception, is false Arguing, and an abuse of Reasoning.

I come now to the fourth Obſevation, which is, that we do not promiſe the like ſubmiſſion to Conſiſtories, nor Colloquies, nor Provincial Synods that we do to National Synods. From whence M. *de Meaux* will have it to follow, that our ſubmiſſion does not reſpect the Word of God merely, and conſidered as ſuch, but the Authority of this ſupreme Aſſembly; for as much as other inferiour Aſſembleis are no leſs obliged to give their judgment according to that Word of God, than a National Synod. I anſwer, That although, abſolutely ſpeaking, an equal ſubmiſſion be due to the Word of God, where, and however it be manifeſted to us, whether in the debates of a Conſiſtory, or thoſe of other Aſſemblies; yet this is no argument, that we ought not engage our ſelves more ſtrongly to ſubmit to the deciſions of a National Synod than other meetings. The reaſon whereof is, that we may with more probability preſume, the deciſions of a National Synod will keep cloſe to the Word of God, and the Rules of Truth, than we can preſume it of the deciſions made by other Aſſemblies. We may reaſonably ſuppoſe, that there will be more underſtanding, and more impartiality in a Company of men choſen of all the Provinces of a large Kingdom, than in a Conſiſtory, a Colloquy, or Provincial Synod; and upon this ſuppoſition, we may very juſtly make ſome difference between them. Beſides, there is no queſtion to be made, but it is a more heinous offence in the ſight of God, for a man to carry on his obſtinacy againſt his Word, as far as this higher Aſſembly, which in all probability propounds it without any humane prepoſſeſſion, or perſonal prejudice, than when he hath only ſlighted it from the mouth of a leſs and inferiour Aſſembly, againſt whom there might objections be found with a great deal more eaſe. The word, conſidered in it ſelf, is continually the ſame, and hath the ſame Authority always, and every where, without receiving any addition, or diminution at all to it, but in proportion as it becomes more or leſs cognoſcible, according to the different means and inſtruments whereby it is propounded. We may very well be allowed to affirm that in reſpect of us, it diſcovers that Authority more or leſs; and upon This it is, that the difference we put between the ſeveral ſorts of Aſſemblies is grounded. The caſe is in a manner the ſame with regard to this Authority, as it is with the King's, which, tho it be the ſupreme in the Commonwealth, and conſequently cannot in it ſelf be made either leſs or greater, yet does for all that appear to the World, and diſcover it ſelf in a more full and valid way, by Letters Patents, and publick Edicts, than by Privy Seals, and the determinations of inferiour Courts of Judicature. But ſtill, as we do not pretend that our obedience is due to the Wax, or the Seal barely, but to the King's Authority,

rity, which that Seal and Wax ſignify to us, in the moſt publick and authoritative way; ſo neither do we own our ſubmiſſion ought to be paid merely to the Authority of a National Synod, nor is it That we yield obedience to, but the Word of God, which that Synod hath made more clear and evident to us.

The Church of *Rome* hath very near the ſame opinion of Provincial Councils, that we have of National Synods, that it does not look upon them to be Infallible: And yet there is no queſtion, they think there is a great deal of difference to be made between their deciſions, and thoſe of a ſingle Biſhop. M. *de Meaux*, for inſtance, will not own that people ought to pay the ſame deference to what he himſelf hath ſpoken, or written concerning matters of Faith, as they ought to what the Clergy of *France* in Convocation ſhall determine upon the ſame Subject. And whence pray ariſes this difference? Is not every particular Biſhop under an obligation to judg agreeably to the Faith of the Catholick Church, every whit as much as Provincial Councils are? And is not, according to his own principles, the ſame abſolute obedience to the Tenets of the Catholick Church required, whereſoever they be met with, whether they come to men from the mouth of one Biſhop, or whether from a Provincial Council? What then is the ground of this difference? *M. de Meaux* can give no other account of it than this, That although a Provincial Council be not infallible, yet, for as much as it is more reaſonable to preſume in favour of it, that it will not deviate from what the Catholick Church holds, than there is to preſume thus much of any one ſingle Biſhop, upon this account men ought to pay a greater deference to the Council than to the Biſhop. And this in agreement with what *Clement* the Fifth defined in the Council of *Vienna*, the ſubſtance of which is, || That the Authority of a Provincial Council is greater than that of every particular Prelate in the Province; and the ſentence is more full, when confirmed by the opinion of a great many. Now change but the terms, and this is exactly the Anſwer that I make to him.

|| Cum majus ſit provinciale Concilium, quam ſingularis Prælati Provinciæ, ac judicium integrum, quod plurimorum ſententiis comprobatur. Vid. *Clementin.* de ſent. Excomm. Tit. 10. Lib. 5.

As for the Fifth Obſervation, 'tis very true, that a Synod of *Rochell* declared that Clauſe of approving and ſubmitting to what ſhould be decreed and reſolved upon, was neceſſary to the validity of the Aſſemblies Concluſions. But what is there in this that can diſguſt *M. de Meaux*? What, that is not grounded upon the evidence of Reaſon? Or, what does

English. Reflect. pag 61. does he pretend to infer from hence? *It is enough*, says he, *to render the Acts of any Assembly valid, that the persons of whom it is composed, have a power of bringing to it the suffrages of those that send them.* He is mistaken. This is sufficient to make each man's suffrages valid, that is, to give every Deputy a right of delivering his opinion in that Assembly; but this is not sufficient to make their publick debates in common valid; that requires a promise of approving and submitting to the deliberations themselves. However, the Synod does not declare an absolute submission to be necessary for that purpose, in that sense this Prelate understands it. The Act implies no such thing as that is.

English. Reflect. Pag. 60. Lastly, *M. de Meaux*'s Sixth Remark, That *a bare humane presumption cannot be the matter and foundation of an Oath*, (as he expresses it) is to me the most surprising thing in the World to come from a Prelate of the Church of *Rome*. In that Church, present, real and effectual Acts are passed every day, and in matters of the highest consequence, upon bare humane presumptions; such as they can have but a moral certainty of at most, or to speak more truly, such as amount to no more than charitable conjectures; upon This they absolve Penitents, upon this they worship the Eucharist, upon this they pray to Canonized Saints, upon this they think their Marriages good and lawful, upon this they receive the Sacraments, upon this they obey a Bishop and a Pope, upon this a Pope and a Bishop enjoy their Benefice with a safe Conscience, and with a safe Conscience discharge all the functions belonging to their Office; and yet *M. de Meaux* after all will tell us, that we cannot upon the very same thing, that is, upon a very strong presumption ground an Oath, which ought not to be put in execution till the presumption is changed into an absolute certainty; nor make a conditional promise, which is of no efficacy at all, till the condition be fulfilled. What shall we call this, if it be not to observe a mote in his Brothers eye, and never perceive the beam in his own eye?

M. de Meaux may please to distinguish betwixt Assertory Oaths, which respect a thing already past, as the subject of our Affirmation or Negation; and promissory Oaths, which concern things to come, and we engage our selves to the performance of. The former of these, I own, cannot be grounded on a bare humane presumption. There is a greater degree of certainty, and a stronger perswasion required, to make a man's Oath lawful, That such a matter or fact was true or false. But all the World knows, that upon the second kind, men swear dayly with a very safe Conscience, in Civil Societies, upon bare presumptions. Upon this ground, a Friend swears an everlasting friendship with the Man he takes to be his Friend; upon this Officers in the Army swear obedi-

obedience and fidelity to their General; upon this a Woman ſwears to acknowledg from that time forward ſuch a particular Man for her lawful Husband; and upon this very ground are all the alliances of Princes contracted, and all the mutual promiſes they make to one another, and confirm by Oaths. It is evident, that if the World ſhould follow *M. de Meaux*'s Rule in this particular, almoſt all Oaths of this kind muſt be utterly baniſht, there being very few of them, that proceed upon more than bare preſumptions.

But why then, ſays he, *is not this great Oath pronounced in theſe Terms? We ſwear before God to ſubmit to all that you ſhall decide, if you decide by his Word, as we hope, and preſume ye will.* M. *de Meax* here, makes a ſtumbling block to himſelf, where there is really none. Is it poſſible, that he ſhould not have conſidered, that there is nothing in the World more common, than to meet with propoſitions expreſt in abſolute and general terms, which yet do include ſome tacit conditions, diſtinctions, and limitations, whether it be, that the nature of the thing diſcover them, or that they ariſe from ſome other Cauſe? For inſtance, God hath ſaid abſolutely, *Thou ſhalt not kill*, and yet we underſtand here, except thou be a Magiſtrate, or that thou kill in a juſt War. God hath ſaid abſolutely, *Thou ſhalt do no manner of work on the Sabbath day*, and yet Jeſus Chriſt hath found out ſuch exceptions to be included here as concern ſuch works as Charity directs, or Neceſſity adviſes to. There is not any duty in Scripture fixed more firmly than obedience to Parents; The Law hath ſaid, *Honour thy Father and thy Mother*; and St. *Paul*, *Children obey your Parents in all things*; nay, *Moſes* adjudged rebellious and diſobedient Children to death. Yet ought we not from hence to conclude this obedience ſo abſolute, but that it admits of many exceptions; we muſt not imagine that it ſuppoſes every Father to be Infallible, or forbids Children to make any manner of enquiry, of what nature the things commanded are. For if a Father ſhould bid his Son riſe up againſt his King, or Sacrifice to falſe Gods, or ſlander his Neighbour, or take away another Man's Goods unjuſtly, Can there be any queſtion, that the Child ought to act contrary to theſe commands, let the terms of the Law enjoyning this obedience be never ſo abſolute? The ſame thing muſt be ſaid of Servants obedience, which the Scripture commands in abſolute terms; *Servants*, ſays the Apoſtle, *obey your Maſters*; and in another place, *Servants obey your Maſters according to the fleſh in all things*; and again in another, *Let the Servants be ſubject to their own Maſters, pleaſing them well in all things, not anſwering again.* Yet ſtill here muſt be ſome exceptions underſtood; for a Servant ought not upon pretence of this obedience, either break the Laws of the Commonwealth;

English Reflect. Pag. 59.

Epheſ. 6. 1.

Epheſ. 6. 5. Coloſſ. 3. 22. Tit. 2. 9.

or

or do any thing immoral, nor act contrary to the dictates of his own Conscience.

We must not expect a greater strictness in the terms of our promises, than God himself shewed in his threatnings. And yet it is sure there are some of his Threatnings to be met with, exprest in very absolute terms, and understood nevertheless with some exceptions and conditions. God says, in the Decalogue, and elsewhere, that he will *visit the sins of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate him.* These words are absolnte; and yet this Condition is contained in them, provided the Children do not turn from the evil way of their Fathers. God says by the mouth of his Prophet,

Psal. 5. 6. Psal. 11. 6. *That he will destroy them that speak leasing, that he abhorreth the bloody and deceitful man; That he will rain upon the wicked, snares, fire and brimstone, that a horrible tempest shall be their portion.* The Threatning seems absolute; and yet in its true meaning, it is limited by this condition, unless they repent and implore the Mercy of God. God signified to the *Ninevites* by

Jon. 3. 4. the Ministry of *Jonas, Yet forty days, and Niniveh shall be destroyed.* Can there any thing be more express and absolute than these words? And yet this clause was to be understood in them, except *Niniveh* humble it self and repent.

What is it then that M. *de Meaux* can discover in our Conditional Oath, that is extraordinary or strange? The Condition we understand in it is natural, it is one of our fundamental principles, it is so universally known among us, that a National Synod cannot possibly be mistaken in the point, nor understand this Oath in any other sence. For this very Condition is expresly in one of the Articles of our Confession of Faith, where we say, ‖ *That neither Antiquity, nor Custome, nor the Number, nor the Wisdome of men, nor their Judgments, Acts, Edicts, nor Decrees, nor Councils, nor Visions, nor Miracles ought to be set in opposition to the holy Scripture; but contrariwise, all things ought to be examined, regulated, and reformed according to the Scripture.* Our submission to the Acts of our National Synods, is in subordination to this supreme Authority of Scripture, and it is by no means necessary, after so authentick a declaration, to express any conditions particularly. None of us ever equivocated in this matter, nor did ever any Synod pretend to act as absolute Masters of Consciences. So that M. *de Meaux* hath free leave to ar-

‖ Ex hoc efficitur, neq; antiquitatem, neq; consuetudines, neq; multitudinem, neq; humanam sapientiam; neq; judicia; neq; edicta, vel decreta ulla, neq; concilia, neq; visiones, neq; miracula, Scripturæ illi Divinæ opponere licere; sed potius omnia ad ejus regulam, & præscriptum examinari, & exigi oportere. Gallic. Confes. Art. 5. vid Harmon. Confess. Edit. Genev. 1581. Pag. 11.

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gue, affirm, and produce what he pleases, to prove our Oath implies an absolute submission; but he can never perswade us it does, because we all know very well, that we do not understand it in any such sense.

But, says he, if you understand it in this sense, *We swear and promise to follow your Decisions, if we find you judg well; there is no person on the Earth to whom one may not say as much. Mr.* Claude *may say it to me, as well as I to him.* M. *de Meaux* is mistaken. A Man cannot reasonably make this promise to any other persons, but such, as not only have a Call to judg in the name of all the Ecclesiastical Society, and are made, as it were, the Depositaries of the common opinions; but besides that, are men that we have some reason to suppose, will judg uprightly. To proceed thus far, it is necessary a Man should have some ground to presume well of them, of their understandings, their abilities, and their honesty, otherwise this could not be a wise and considerate promise; and to interpose an Oath upon such an occasion, were to prophane the Name of God, and abuse our holy Religion. If I should ask M. *de Meaux*, wherefore he adores the host at the Elevation, seeing, according to his own principles, there can be no absolute certainty, but only a humane presumption of its being consecrated; he will answer me, according to the common opinion of the Doctors of his Church, That this Adoration hath constantly a condition implied and understood, that the Priest hath done all that is required for its consecration, that is, that this is the meaning and sense of his Adoration, *I adore Thee, if thou beest consecrated.* But if I tell him, he might say as much of the common Bread at his own Table, he will certainly answer me as the famous *Gerson*, Chancellor of the University of *Paris* does, That this cannot be, no not tho the very Condition were expresst, because the same Circumstances that attend the Bread upon the Altar, do not attend the Bread at any common Table, and therefore we cannot presume the same thing of the one that we may of the other. This Answer he need only apply to himself. I cannot engage my self for the same submission to his decisions, that I can to a National Synod; because I do not meet with the same Circumstances in him, nor can entertain the same favourable presumption of him. English Reflect. p. 61.

But, says he further, *If you take an Oath that is no more than Conditional, without expressing the Condition of it, your Oath is then deceitful and illusory, and you do by magnificent words impose upon the peoples credulity.* This is the second head of his objection, which he propounds with mighty aggravations, and abundance of assurance. *If after a promise*, says he, *confirm'd by so solemn an Oath, they pretend a Liberty is still left them to examine, I confess I know not what words signify, and there never was any mental evasion so full of illusion and equivocation.* Eng. Reflect. p. 63. Eng. Reflect. p. 58

Gently, I beſeech you, *Sir*; if our Oath be therefore an illuſion, and a mental Equivocation, becauſe we underſtand it with a condition of judging according to the Word of God, and a reſerve of examination, then the Laws and threatnings of God, confirmed by all that Pomp and Majeſty which appeared upon Mount *Sinai*, will, according to M. *de Meaux*, be likewiſe no better than illuſions and mental equivocations, for the ſame Reaſon; becauſe they are underſtood with ſome diſtinctions, exceptions and reſervations. Men ought to be a little more cautious, and not brand all kinds of tacit implications ſo ſuddenly, with the name of Illuſion and Mental Equivocation. When the matter treated of is of that nature, that the diſtinction, exception or condition neither can, nor ought to be naturally underſtood in our words according to the common rules of ſpeech and converſation, then indeed to leave them to be underſtood, is an Illuſion, and Mental Equivocation; for 'tis a downright Lye, a ſurpriſe committed upon the honeſt plainneſs of them we ſpeak to, and a ſnare which we lay for their credulity. But if the condition, diſtinction, or reſervation may be, and naturally are of themſelves underſtood without any difficulty, or hæſitation, and if in truth all the World underſtands them ſo, then this tacit implication is not only no Illuſion, but it would on the contrary be an Illuſion in any that ſhould refuſe to admit it, and take upon him to give the terms an abſolute and unlimited ſence.

Thus in the Civil State, when the Tenant or Vaſſal pays homage to his Lord of the Mannor, and ſwears ſervice and fidelity to him, againſt all perſons whatſoever; his Oath does ſo naturally include an exception of the Prince, that it would really be a fault to underſtand it otherwiſe. And it was merely from ſome Landlord's abuſing this Oath of their Tenants, who ſtretched it ſo far as to ſhock the Power of the Prince, that the Emperor *Frederick* the firſt, appointed for the future, that the Emperor ſhould be excepted in expreſs terms, to remove all manner of pretence for his Subjects revolting. The ſame caſe we find in the Decretals, the Conſuls of a Town belonging to the Pope, had condemned a Man to make reſtitution of ſome Goods, and put their Sentence in execution, notwithſtanding the condemned perſon had Appealed to the Pope. Now this they had done upon pretence, that when they came on Conſuls, they had ſworn to ſee their Sentences, in Cauſes of that kind, put in execution before twenty days were expired, ſo that, in their opinion, the Appeal could not obſtruct this execution, contrary to their Oath. The buſineſs being brought before Pope *Innocent* the third, he declared they ought to give way to the Appeal, and that they were to blame, to think their Oath could be any hindrance at

Decretal. *Greg.* Lib. 2. de Jurei. Tit. 24. cap. 19.

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all to their doing so: *Because*, says he, *in Oaths of this kind, there must always be understood an exception of the superiours right.* Debet intelligi jus superioris exceptum.

But what need we fetch Arguments so far off? M. *de Meaux* himself gives us a sufficient one, for the evading his accusation, in that Oath of Faith and Allegiance which I suppose he made to the Pope, (as all other Bishops do) at his promotion to a Bishoprick. The form of it we meet with in the *Roman* Pontifical, and nothing can be pretended more authentick, nor more absolute. The Bishop elect kneels at the feet of him that consecrates, and holding both his hands upon the Holy Gospels, he reads the form of the Oath, where among other things he swears, † *To be faithful and obedient to the Pope, to observe with all his Power, his Decrees, his Ordinances, his Disposals, his Reservations, his Provisions, and Apostolical Commands, to cause them to be observed by others, with all his might, to pursue and impugn Hereticks, Schismaticks, and Rebels against our Lord the Pope, or his Successors, and to labour for the Preservation, Defence, Encrease, and Extent of the Rights, Honours, Priviledges, and Authority of the Holy* Roman *Church, and our Lord the Pope.* This Oath is express in these very absolute terms, the only reserve in it, is the Episcopal Dignity, *Salvo meo ordine.* That is, says the Gloss, * he will serve him in such a manner as his Honour allows, and not by Arms. He promises Faith and Obedience in general, he specifies the Decrees and Ordinances of Popes in particular, and consequently their decisions in matters of Faith. And yet all this while two things are agreed upon, and unquestioned, the one, that the Pope may err in disquisitions of Faith; and the second, that his Authority, be it never so great, is still subjected to that of Councils and Canons. How does M. *de Meaux* understand it? For if his meaning be, that this Oath obliges the Bishops to a plenary and absolute obedience, without any condition, or limitation, and without reserving a right of Examination, this, according to his own Tenet, will be a rash Oath, because it may happen, that the Pope shall make Ordinances of Discipline, contradicting the Canons, and give decisions of Faith, which shall not be unreformable. But if he think there are

† Fidelis & obediens ero Domino nostro Domino N. Papæ, suisq; successoribus canonicè intrantibus, —— Jura, honores, privilegia, & authoritatem Ecclesiæ Romanæ, Domini nostri Papæ & successorum prædictorum, conservare, defendere, augere & promovere curabo. —— Regulas sanctorum Patrum, decreta, ordinationes, seu dispositiones, Reservationes, Provisiones, & mandata Apostolica totis viribus observabo, & faciam ab aliis observari; Hæreticos, Schismaticos, & rebelles eidem Domino nostro, vel successoribus prædictis, pro posse prosequar & impugnabo. Pontifical. Roman edit. Venet. 1582.

* Salvo meo ordine, id est, secundum quod pertinet ad meum honorem, quia non cum armis, Greg. Decret. Lib. 2. de Jurejur. Tit. 24. Cap. 4. in Gloss.

Exceptions and Conditions underſtood in it, and leave to himſelf ſtill a right of Examination, this likewiſe will be according to what he hath ſaid, a mental Evaſion, full of Illuſion, and Equivocation.

What difference now can he find between theſe two Caſes, I mean between our Oath for the National Synod, and the Lords Biſhops Oaths for the Pope, that will not make for us? We take an Oath before-hand for thoſe deciſions, which as yet we do not know; The Biſhops take one too for the Decrees and Judgments, which they know nothing at all of, and which are yet to come. We ſwear ſubmiſſion in hopes that the deciſions will be made according to Truth and Equity, tho this hope be not altogether infallible; The Biſhops do as much, they ſwear obedience, in hopes that the Decrees of their Popes will not Deviate from the Canons of the Church, nor the Rules of Faith; nay, they do not expreſs this hope as we do; and if they did expreſs it, no man could ſay it was more certain or infallible than ours. We explain our Oath, by confining it to ſuch things as ſhall be found agreeable to the Word of God; The Biſhops confine theirs likewiſe to ſuch things as ſhall not ſhock the Decrees of the Council of *Conſtance*, concerning the Authority of General Councils, to ſuch as ſhall not overthrow the Canons of the Catholick Church, to ſuch as ſhall not be reformed by the Church. All the difference there is between them and us, lies here, that the Aſſembly to which we promiſe ſubmiſſion, does not pretend to infallibility, nor require an abſolute obedience from us, ſo that it neither does, nor can take our Promiſe in any other ſenſe, than we intend it; But the Pope, who puts in his pretentions to both theſe, may very well abuſe the Biſhops Oaths, by taking them in a ſenſe never deſigned them, and ſo tax them with mental evaſion, illuſion, and equivocation. Beſides, the Authority of God's Word, which we except, is a thing which among us is excepted naturally of it ſelf, without any oppoſition, diſpute, or difficulty at all; whereas in the Church of *Rome*, all the World knows men differ vaſtly concerning the Authority of Councils, and the Popes do not ſeem by any means convinced that it is ſuperiour to theirs.

There is then no need of a reply in this Caſe; the ſame ſentence that condemns us, condemns the Biſhops; the ſame mouth that accuſes us, does accuſe them too; the ſame Pen that encounters us, encounters them; and now all upon a ſudden, before we were aware, they and we are engaged in the ſame common Cauſe, and both under the ſame obligation to vindicate our ſelves againſt M. *de Meaux*. M. *de Meaux* ſays, our Oath can admit but of two ſenſes; either this, *We promiſe, and ſwear to follow your deciſions, if we find ye judg well*; or this other, *We are ſo perſwaded you will judg well, that we ſwear, and promiſe to follow your deciſi-*

English Reflect. n. 61, 62.

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ons. The same things the Bishops may apply to themselves. Their Oath can admit but Two senses, either, we swear and promise to receive your Decrees, if you decree well; or, we are so perswaded that you will decree well, that we swear and promise to follow your decrees. M. *de Meaux* goes on, *The First sense is a manifest illusion, and the other clearly supposes infallibility:* The Bishops shall answer this, if they think fit, for this cannot be true with regard to us, but it must be true with regard to them; nor false in their case, but it must be false in ours likewise. Pag. 62.

M. *de Meaux* says further, That *for the making this Promise, and confirming it with an Oath, 'tis requisite, the Assembly 'tis made to, should have a Divine Promise of being assisted by the Holy Ghost, which is, That it should be infallible.* It now lyes upon the Bishops to tell us their Opinion of the Business; for change but the word *Assembly* for that of *Pope*, and they may apprehend it spoken to them; all that I shall venture to say upon it, is only this; that M. *de Meaux* seemed to me, to have been so eager, and busy about us, that he had not any leisure to think, what would become either of his Reverend Brethren, or of himself. It is not therefore *Tradition* alone, that *sometimes makes men say more than they would, and inspires into them things contrary to their own opinions*, (as M. *de Meaux* tells us) but it seems, Controversy and dispute have sometimes the same operation. Pag. 62. English. Reflect. Pag. 63.

The Second Reflection examined, concerning the Consequence, M. de Meaux *pretends, will follow from our Principle,* viz. *That every particular Person is obliged to believe, that he may understand God's Word, better than the most universal Synods, and all the Church together.*

WHat we have hitherto observed in M. *de Meaux* his First Reflection, was in proper speaking, no more than a Prelude to his Disputes, a frolick of Wit, upon some Articles of our Discipline; and, if I may so say, a sort of skirmish to bring on the fight, the main Battel is in this Second Reflection, and the Four other that follow. These contain this Prelates Two main Arguments, those Two upon which he crys out, *We must boldly say, Truth hath gained a manifest Victory.* These are the Two strange Propositions, at which *Madamoiselle de Duras* continued in such an astonishment, when he told her, that *these were constant Maxims in the* Protestants. Advertis. Fol. 2.

English Conf. Pag. 15. English Advertiſ. Fol. 2. Ibid. Ibid. English Advertiſ. Ibid. English Reflect. Pag. 64. Ibid. Pag. 64.

Proteſtants *Religion, and neceſſary conſequences of their Doctrine concerning the Churches Authority.* Theſe are the Two conſequences, upon which he confidently affirms, *That any* Proteſtant *how able and ſubtil ſoever, will certainly find himſelf reduced, not always indeed to hold his Peace, but what is no leſs ſtrange than ſilence, to ſay nothing when he ſhall attempt to ſpeak, but viſible Abſurdities. This* he ſays *befel Mr.* Claude, *what he avows, ruines his Cauſe; and the places where he ſtood without an Anſwer, are indeed ſuch as ſuffer none.* But now if this Miniſter ſhould be ſo hardy to diſpute this, what would become of him then? *Where-ever* (proceeds M. *de Meaux*) *Mr.* Claude *ſhall ſay, That he hath not acknowledged, what I make him acknowledg in the Recital of the Conference, I engage my ſelf, in a Second Conference, to draw again from him the ſame acknowledgment, and where-ever he ſhall ſay, That he was not without an Anſwer, I will force him without any other Argument, but thoſe he has already heard, to Anſwers ſo viſibly abſurd, that any man of good ſenſe ſhall acknowledg he had far better have been ſilent, than have made uſe of them.* This Mr. *Claude* had need ſtand upon his guard then; and yet let him be as wary as he can, he is like to be catched. But it may be this reſpects him only in particular, and ſome other Miniſters may poſſibly be more fortunate in the attempt. *For fear it ſhould be ſaid,* adds M. *de Meaux* again, *that Mr.* Claude *engaged himſelf in theſe Inconveniences by ill management; I on the contrary affirm, That this Advantage is ſo inherent to our Cauſe, that there is no Miniſter, no Doctor, no man living, but muſt in the ſame manner ſink under the like Argument. Thoſe who will make tryal of it, ſhall ſee that this is no vain Promiſe.*

In this manner M. *de Meaux* preſents us with Sallies of his Courage, and the confidence he repoſes in the ſtrength of his Arguments. And now you may ſee the poor *Proteſtant* Religion felled down at a blow, without any poſſibility of riſing again. Afterwards, coming to a particular Explication of the Buſineſs in hand, *I pretended, ſaith he, to ſhew in the Conference, that by denying the Churches infallible Authority, one falls into theſe Two inconveniences, and I ſaid, not into one of the Two, but inevitably into both of them. The Firſt is, That every particular perſon, how ignorant ſoever he be, is obliged to believe, that for all that, he may underſtand God's Word better than the moſt univerſal Synods, and all the reſt of the Church together. The Second, That there is a time, when a Baptiſed Chriſtian is not in a Condition to make an Act of Faith upon the Holy Scripture, but that, whether he will or no, he ſhall find himſelf obliged to doubt whether it be inſpired by God.* If any man ſhall deſire to know, what we ought to think of theſe Propoſitions, he proteſts in the beginning of his Diſcourſe, *That he hath not ſeen any of the pretended Reformed, in whom they have not cauſed an horror, and who hath not told him, he ſhould be ſo far from ever believing himſelf, that he ſhould de-*

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first those which did. A little further he adds, *That this Doctrine will appear hideous to every docible Spirit.* But now, if the pretended Reformed have these Propositions in such a mighty abhorrence, as M. *de Meaux* pretends they have, if they appear hideous to them, How does this consist with their being the constant Maxims of the Reformed Religion, as M. *de Meaux*, positively affirmed to *Madamoiselle de Duras*, they are? It is not so very natural, to be of a Religion, to stick to it, and persevere in it unto the end, (for M. *de Meaux* hath seen some Persons do so); and yet all the while to detest the constant Maxims of it, to have them in a perfect abhorrence, and look upon them, as hideous; and it is still less so, to go and downright declare these Opinions to M. *de Meaux*. *It continues*, says he, *fixt by the Conference, that they are the Consequences of their Doctrine.* Of their Doctrine? That is, in all probability, consequences which M. *de Meaux* pretends to infer from their Doctrines, but such as they themselves disown, and reject, and think they are falsly chrged with. No such matter says he; *They are such manifest Consequences, that they are owned by their Ministers. And, not to depart from Mr.* Claude's *Relation, he himself asserts in it, that after all Ecclesiastical Assemblies, every particular Person ought to examine, whether they have well understood God's Word, or no.* These retenced Reformed which M. *de Meaux* hath seen, are sure very strange men; for, if these be the constant Maxims of their Religion, if they be the consequences of their Doctrine, if their Ministers themselves own them, how is it possible they should be ignorant of them? And if they know them, How should they without changing their Religion immediately go and tell M. *de Meaux*, that they abhor them? And that they do not only not believe them themselves, but shall detest such as do believe them? I confess, this appears to me a little odd, and unaccountable, because I am pretty well assured, that M. *de Meaux* hath not as yet converted all those he hath seen of our Religion, and that by God's Blessing, our Religion hath not yet any occasion to apply that saying to him,

Pag. 63.

Pag. 64.

Pag. 64.

Quis teneros oculus mihi fascinat agnos?

I am sorry, M. *de Meaux* should discover himself so much in love, so excessively fond of false subtilties; and, if he will give me leave to say so, of trifles, and things of nothing, which men are made to believe mighty matters; It is a temper, which I could heartily wish, did not shew it self in his Writings. And yet here upon this occasion, we find it in such a vaunting manner, that we cannot but take notice of it. All that he says of the consequences pretended to be deduced from our Principle, all that he exposes to view, and reckons up so particularly, all that he

he is so peremptory in, throughout the Five Reflections, in which he insults, and triumphs with such abundance of self-satisfaction, are only some pitiful, little, popular equivocations, which, when once unmaskt, come either to nothing, or are false imputations upon us. To evince this, I will begin with this Prelate's Proposition, *That according to us, every particular Person, how ignorant soever he may be, is obliged to believe, that he may understand God's Word, better than the universal Synods, and all the Church together.* This Proposition is capable of a Two-fold sence. Either, First, That every particular Person, how ignorant soever he may be, is obliged to believe that he may understand the Word of God, better than the most universal True Synods, composed of honest, and upright Persons, of Pious, Wise, and Learned men, assembled in the Name of Jesus Christ, and than all the rest of the True Church together: Or Secondly, That every particular Believer, whom God assists with his Holy Spirit, is obliged to believe, that he may understand God's Word, better than the most universal False Synods, which shall be composed of Worldlings, byassed persons, and Hypocrites; that is, of men to whom God does not impart his Spirit, and better than all the Worldly men put together, though they falsly call themselves the Church.

Let M. *de Meaux* chuse which of these Two senses he shall think most for his turn to fix upon us. If it be the Second, I say, That his Consequence so much boasted of, falls to nothing, and less than nothing, for where is the fault, where the absurdity, of saying, That in matters of supernatural
1 Cor. 2. Revelation, (which as St. *Paul* says are not known, but by the Spirit of God; and, which God, according to that saying of Jesus Christ, reveals unto Babes, at the same time that he hides them from the Wise and Pru-
Matth. 11. dent,) God may give to every one of his Children more light and ability to understand them aright, than all the Children of this World shall have together, whether assembled in Synod, or not assembled, more than all those blind People shall have, whom God hath given over to a reprobate sense? What can M. *de Meaux* find in this Proposition, that should make it look so hideous, or rather, that is not agreeable to the Doctrine of Jesus Christ, and his holy Apostles, and to the nature of the Christian Faith? If this were all the Business, what needed he carry on his Consequence, and exaggerate it at that rate? What needed he boast himself so mightily of the abhorrence it raised in all the pretended Reformed, that heard him speak of it, and of their promise to detest all such as should believe it? What need he upon this particular bid open defiance to every Minister, every Doctor, every man living; and handle this Proposition in such reproachful Terms, as a hideous Doctrine full of Pride, and Presumption? All he had to do, was only to tender this Consequence to Mr. *Claude*, and

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make him, and every other Miniſter own it in Conferences, and before what Company he pleaſed, whether they would or no. And he may, if he pleaſe, ſpare himſelf that trouble; for, from this time forwards, Mr. *Claude* does not only own it himſelf, he does not only own it in the name of all the Miniſters, he does not only promiſe to own it always; but he maintains further, in behalf both of himſelf, and all his Brethren, That there is no *Roman* Catholick in the World; no, not though it ſhould be M. *de Meaux* himſelf, who can call it into queſtion without renouncing the Goſpel, and who ought not to reject the contrary opinion with horror and deteſtation.

But, if this Prelate ſhall make choice of the former ſenſe, we ſhall not be afraid to tell him *boldly*, that it is a mere imputation caſt upon us, a thing that the *Proteſtants* never affirm, nor ever will, which does not at all follow from their Principles, and which I was very far from granting in the Conference; in one word, that it is a thing we condemn univerſally, and are all ready to declare, That we look upon it to be contrary to right Reaſon, and oppoſite to the methods of Divine Providence.

Therefore let M. *de Meaux* come out of the Clouds; let him pleaſe to explain himſelf, and ſpeak clearly and diſtinctly. For if by theſe Great words, *The moſt Univerſal Synods, and all the Church together*; he means falſe Synods, and a Church that is not true, we acknowledg, that every Believer may really underſtand the Word of God better than all thoſe men, and his Buſineſs is, to ſee what conſequence he can draw from hence, and in the mean time we will ſhew him what cannot be deduced from it.

Our Principles, as we have already ſeen very often in the courſe of this Diſpute, are, 1. That the True Church conſiſts of True Believers only; that is to ſay, ſuch as God hath called inwardly, and regenerated by the light of his Holy Spirit, and the lively impreſſion of his Word upon their Souls. 2. That the true Believers are mixed in outward Communion with an almoſt infinite company of wicked men, worldlings, profane perſons, and hypocrites, who are thoſe Tares the Goſpel mentions, which the Enemy ſowed by Night among the good Corn. 3. That the Miniſtry is often ſupplied with ſuch kind of People as are not of God's Church, but only by way of counterfeit and outward appearance, and are more Enemies, and Oppreſſors of the Church, than any Friends to it. 4. That out of this Miniſtry compoſed oftentimes of ſuch Perſons, the moſt General Aſſemblies, and moſt Univerſal Synods, though aſſembled *from the Four parts, and the middle of the World*, as M. *de Meaux* expreſſes himſelf, are elected. For they are not Angels come down from Heaven, but meer men; they are not Prophets, nor inſpired Apoſtles, but ordinary Miniſters; nor is it God that pitches upon them, by any immediate deſignation, but men Elect; and it oftentimes happens that the Electors, and the Elected, are

both as good one as the other. 5. That, be that how it will, no man can be absolutely certain, that the persons composing this Assembly, are of the True Church of God, or do partake at all of his Holy Spirit, nor consequently can he be sure that their decisions are the *True* Churches decisions, any more than the false and counterfeit. 6. That nevertheless, men ought to presume favourably of such Assemblies, and hope that by the Grace of God they will discharge their duty; and, according as this favourable prejudice is grounded upon greater or less degrees of probability, the Effect of it ought to be proportionable, and incline the mind more or less on the Assemblies side. 7. But still, since granting the Presumption to be never so strong, it can be no more than humane, because there are no Promises made by God in behalf of these Assemblies, that they shall be infallible, and there are plain instances of their being not so, the only means which Believers have left to know the matter clearly, and to quiet their own Consciences, is to inspect and examine the decisions themselves, and compare them with God's own Word. Now from hence we hold it follows, that every Believer is obliged in order to the securing his Salvation, to examine the decisions according to that proportion of light he hath received, because to let his Salvation continue in hazardous Circumstances, to put himself in any danger of following prophane Persons, and so being damned along with them, were the most wicked thing, and would involve a man in the deepest guilt of any action in the World.

I do not here take upon me to enquire, whether these Propositions be true, or whether any thing might be alledged in opposition to them. After what hath been perused in the first part of this Work, I am perswaded that if there be but another view taken of them, there is not any of them, but, as you run over it with your eye, will appear either self-evident, or else advanced upon such proofs, as ought to put it past a doubt. All we have to do at present, is only to know what is the consequence of this right, which we allow all Believers to examine the decisions of Assemblies; and whether every particular person is obliged from hence to believe, that he may understand God's Word better than the most Universal Synods, supposing them True Synods, And than all the True Church together.

First then, I say, a very moderate Observation, and common sense will serve to inform us, that the right of examination being grounded upon our being uncertain whether the Synods be true or false Synods, and whether the Church which follows them be the true Church or no; and the design of that examination, being to rid us of that uncertainty, every Believer cannot be obliged to any more than Three things; To hope that God

God will enable him to discern that point aright. To believe, that if they be in very deed true Synods, and a true Church, he shall be enabled to understand the word of God as they do, and light upon the same meaning and interpretation with them. To believe, that if in reality these be found false Synods at the bottom, and the Church which adheres to them, no true Church, God can endue him with such a measure of his Grace, as that he may understand his Word better than these Assemblies. The right of examination implies only these three things, and to look for more from it, would be to act contrary to the rules of right Reason. The Examination is not design'd to correct the sense of the true Church, or to attain to a better understanding than hers; but quite contrary, it is allowed men, to the intent they may aquiesce in her sense, and follow it. The Examination does not proceed upon a supposition, That the true Church could at any time deviate from the true meaning of God's Word in matters essential and fundamental; nor upon a hope, that the Examiners shall be indued with a greater measure of light than she; but quite contrary, it goes upon a supposition, That she cannot at any time deviate from that true meaning, and perfectly intends to have no other opinion than hers.

Further yet, M. *de Meaux* his pretended consequence not only cannot be deduced from our principle, but is directly, and diametrically opposite to it; for there is a formal contradiction between saying, I examine, to the intent I may be found exactly agreeable to the true Church, in the understanding God's Word; and saying, I examine, that I may understand God's Word better than the true Church. There is a palpable contradiction between saying, If this Synod appear to me to be a true Synod, and such as hath followed the Word of God faithfully, I will acquiesce in its decision, and submit my self to it; and saying, If it appear to me, that this is a true Synod, and hath understood the Word of God aright, I will not however acquiesce in its decision, but will understand the Word of God still better than it hath done. So that the Consequence M. *de Meaux* fixes upon us, hath no more agreement with our principle, than light hath with darkness.

That which occasioned this Prelate's mistake, was, that he fancied we did at the very first, look upon a Synod formally assembled, as he does, to be the true Church of Christ, and that afterwards upon this perswasion, we proposed to our selves the taking its decisions into examination; whereas indeed we look upon an Universal Synod at first, to be only an Assembly, of which we have no more than a good presumption, but by no means an absolute certainty, That they are the true Church of Jesus Christ; and for that Reason we proceed to Examination. He sup-

poſed his own principle inſtead of ours, and upon that miſtake, a miſtake not becoming a perſon of his abilities, he argued thus; Theſe men take upon them to examine ſuch deciſions as they believe to be given by the true Church, therefore they believe they may underſtand God's Word better than the true Church. But he ought not to build upon ſo falſe a foundation, but rather argue the contrary way, and ſay, Theſe men examine the deciſions, to ſee whether they be delivered by the true Church or no, by their correſpondence with the Word of God, and if they be found ſuch, that they may acquieſce in them; they do not therefore think they can underſtand God's Word better than the true Church: Thus if he had taken our principle as he ſhould have done, it would have led him to a Conſequence quite oppoſite to that he hath deduced from it. But poſſibly he was ignorant of it? Not at all. He had ſeen it very diſtinctly explained in my Anſwer to his Diſcourſe, and the ſixth Conſequence there, which the Reader may if he pleaſes conſult.

To make this matter ſtill more evident, it is neceſſary we diſtinguiſh between ſuch apprehenſions as are purely *ſpeculative*, as we term it, and thoſe that are *practical*. Betwixt theſe two kinds of apprehenſions there is this difference, that for the moſt part the *ſpeculative* act freely, and take their courſe without interruption, and that they are not near ſo liable to be perplexed, or forcibly carried on by humane intereſts and paſſions. Every man finds himſelf pretty free to Philoſophiſe according to the dictates of his underſtanding, upon the ſeveral Syſtems of the World, the nature and courſe of the Stars, upon the Circulation of the Blood, and ſuch like other things, where he does not commonly find himſelf biaſt to incline to one part more than another. But it is far otherwiſe with the apprehenſions we call *Practical*, theſe ſcarcely ever act freely, by reaſon of their being ſo connected and interwoven with the advantages of this life. Then Intereſts excite the paſſions, and thoſe paſſions darken for the moſt part, or put out our apprehenſions; or if they do not put them quite out, they do at leaſt force them to lye hid, and appear leſs clearly, and hinder them from exerting themſelves. All the World knows what I ſay to be true, and there are very few who are not ſome more, ſome leſs ſenſible of it from their own experience. Hence proceed, not only erroneous opinions, fantaſtical conceits and whimſies in private men, but alſo publick errors, diſorders and confuſions, which we may obſerve predominant over whole Nations. It is very evident, that when once a fallity, a contradiction, an abſurdity, tho never ſo ridiculous, hath found the way to link it ſelf with mens worldly intereſts, it is generally received with applauſe and approbation, men are content to think it very good at that rate, their wits rally from all parts

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to its ſuccour, to countenance and maintain it, and its being in that poſt, is ſuch a mighty advantage, that leſs than a ſort of miracle will not overthrow it, for even the wiſeſt men eſteem it an act of prudence, to accommodate themſelves to times and occaſions.

This diſtinction thus premiſed, I ſay, that the thing which forms the deciſions of the moſt univerſal Synods, concerning matters of Faith and Religion, is not purely the *Speculative* apprehenſion of that Aſſembly, but their *Practical* apprehenſions, the conſequence of which is, that Paſſion and Intereſt have a very great ſhare in them. It is not properly the Learning, nor Study, nor the Capacity, nor the Dignity, nor the great number of Members, that prevent erroneous deciſions being given by theſe Aſſemblies; but it is Probity, Piety, and the Fear of God, and if theſe be away, it will be no longer the Word of God that preſides in Synods, but the paſſions of men, temporal reſpects, and worldly Intereſts.

When therefore we allow every Believer a right of examining what ſhall be decided, our meaning is not, That theſe particular men have either more Learning, or more Wit, or more of that Speculative apprehenſion which is acquired by ſtudy, than there ſhall be in a Synod, tho we ſhould ſuppoſe the members of it to be all of them prophane and worldly men. Not but that there is a poſſibility of this too, as M. *de Meaux* himſelf acknowledged in his Conference, *Oftentimes*, ſays he, *One wiſe man may be able to give better inſtructions than a whole Synod together.* There is no body however but knows, that prophane and worldly men who have ſtudied, and made it their buſineſs, ſhall attain to a greater degree of this kind of apprehenſion, than plain Believers. But our meaning is, That there may be in a Synod, let it be as Univerſal as it will, unleſs it be compoſed of honeſt and good men, leſs of that practical apprehenſion and knowledg, that is, a great deal more corruption, a great deal more of partial and politick conſiderations, a great deal more remiſneſs and looſneſs of principles, a great deal more of ſecret engagements to advance and patronize an Error, a great deal leſs love for the Truth, than ſhall be met with in each private Believer, whom God hath regenerated by the power of his Grace. And this is evidently ſufficient to give men a right, and lay upon them an obligation to examine what is decided.

Let us illuſtrate this by an inſtance. I dwell in a City, which I know to be compoſed both of good and bad Citizens. I know that here are ſome Traitors crept into the very Senate, but I neither know what perſons theſe are in particular, nor how ſtrong, nor how many there may be. The Senate meets, and agrees upon Reſolutions; it is poſſible the

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honeſt party got the day, but it may be too that the ill mens vote carried it. In this caſe I cannot be ſufficiently ſatisfied for my own eaſe and ſecurity, but by examining their deliberations, and the meaſures they have taken, that ſo I may not follow the ill part, while I deſign the good. Will you ſay now, that this examination implies I believe my ſelf able to underſtand the real Intereſts of the City, better than the beſt Senators, and the moſt honeſt faithful Citizens? No ſure, it were a very abſurd Collection. Or will you from thence infer that I pretend to a greater ſhare of ſpeculative knowledg in judging of this Intereſt, than the corrupt Senators, and all the Citizens of their party? Not that neither. But what would you ſay then? Why only, that this ſuppoſes, that I being my ſelf an honeſt Citizen, do hope, that if the Senators have been faithful to the truſt repoſed in them by their Country, my apprehenſions will agree with theirs; and on the contrary, that if they have prevaricated, and dealt perfidiouſly, my practical apprehenſions may be more ſincere and upright than theirs. This is very eaſily applied to the matter in hand.

Laſtly, That M. *de Meaux* may receive full and perfect ſatisfaction in this point of his pretended Conſequence, I tell him, that there ought to be a diſtinction made of thoſe deciſions which Synods may give in points of Doctrine: For ſome of them reſpect only School Controverſies, and ſuch as the Learned differ in; but the common people are not concerned in at all. Of this kind, for inſtance, was the deciſion upon that queſtion ſo much bandi'd between the *Latin* and *Greek* Church, concerning the Proceſſion of the Holy Ghoſt, and ſeveral others of the like nature. But then there be others touching ſuch things as are neceſſary or prejudicial to the Salvation of every particular perſon, and, by conſequence, they do, if I may ſo ſpeak, fall properly within their Juriſdiction, and they are competent Judges of them, and of this ſort are the deciſions made by the Council of *Trent*, concerning the Adoration it preſcribes to be given to the Sacrament, the Invocation of Saints, and the Worſhipping their Images.

When we ſay, every Believer is under an obligation to Examine, it would be abſurd to fancy this were ſpoken with reſpect to the deciſions of the firſt rank; for thoſe being above the capacity of the plainer ſort of men, and not at all concerning their Salvation, cannot lay any abſolute obligation upon ſuch, to trouble themſelves with them, and conſequently not to examine them. The ſecond ſort therefore are the only ones they have any thing to do with, which are knowable by the plaineſt people, and with relation to which, God imparts to every believer, how plain and ignorant ſoever he be, ſufficient means of knowledg, or

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at leaſt diſpoſes him with a good upright Conſcience with Piety, and Sincerity, which in affairs of this nature, is a much ſafer way, and a more juſt Principle, than all the Learning in the World, where ſuch a Conſcience is wanting. So that, when we have deducted all the neceſſary abatements from M. *de Meaux's* Conſequence, it will be found, that all comes to no more than this, That every Believer is allowed to think, that in matters wherein his Salvation is concerned, and which have a plain and immediate influence upon the Conſcience of every Believer, he may have more practical Apprehenſion, and knowledg how to follow God's Word, than the moſt univerſal Synods, in which Temporal reſpects, worldly Intereſts, and the paſſions of men bear ſway, and not the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt. This is all that follows from our Principle; and let M. *de Meaux* ſay what he will, there can be no more concluded from it. This Prelate therefore was manifeſtly out in his reckoning; and after what I have ſaid juſt now, I believe he himſelf cannot but think ſo.

That which is ſtill more ſtrange in all this, is, that he never obſerv'd, nor provided againſt his own pretended Conſequence being retorted back upon himſelf with at leaſt as much ſtrength and reaſon, as it can poſſibly be objected to us. As for our part, we who own no other for the True Church, but that which is compoſed of True Believers, will conſtantly affirm upon our own principles, that we own every Believer obliged to think, he may underſtand God's Word better than a whole Eccleſiaſtical Aſſembly, only upon a ſuppoſal, that this Aſſembly falſly arrogates to it ſelf the name of the True Church, when it is not really ſo. But if we may borrow M. *de Meaux* his own Terms, and ſhould tell him, That by denying as he does, to own any infallibility in particular Doctors, in each ſingle Biſhop, in the Schools, in the moſt celebrated Faculties, in Provincial Councils, in National Councils, though never ſo numerous, and even in the Popes themſelves, giving determinations, *ex Cathedra*, he falls into this inconvenience, that hereby he obliges every particular perſon, how ignorant ſoever he may be, to believe, that he may for all that underſtand the Word of God better than theſe Doctors, theſe Biſhops, theſe Schools, theſe Faculties, theſe Councils, theſe Popes, and than all their followers and Adherents; what could he anſwer to this Argument, unleſs it were to return the ſame thing we do? Is there any more conſquence in ſaying thus, You do not hold an univerſal Synod to be infallible, therefore you think you may underſtand the Word of God better than it; than there is in this, You do not hold theſe Doctors, theſe Biſhops, theſe Schools, theſe Faculties, theſe Councils, theſe Popes, infallible, therefore you think you may underſtand God's Word better than they? And the Conſequence being

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acknowledged equally ſtrong on both ſides, as indeed there can be no diſpute but it is, is it any more probable, that a plain private man, how ignorant ſoever he may be, ſhould have a clearer apprehenſion than his Guide, than his Biſhop, than all the *Sorbon* College, than an Aſſembly of all the Clergy in *France*: Or laſtly, than a Pope himſelf, the Head and Husband of the Catholick Church, together with all his Cardinals, and all his Adherents; than for one to affirm, That he may apprehend more clearly than an Univerſal Synod to whom God does not communicate his Spirit, but gives them over to a reprobate ſenſe? Is not there as great inconvenience attending one of theſe Aſſertions, as the other? Is there not not as much Pride and Preſumption in one of the Propoſitions, as there is in the other? And will not any perſon, who ſhall engage M. *de Meaux*, and contend for the infallibility of Popes and National Councils, have the very ſame advantages over M. *de Meaux*, which he hath pretended to have againſt us?

To this perhaps it may be ſaid, That theſe Two caſes are vaſtly different, in that a ſingle private perſon does not oppoſe theſe other ſubordinate Authorities, which are liable to Err, any further than is conſiſtent with his ſubmiſſion to the Churches Supreme and infallible Authority, when aſſembled in a general Council; whereas according to our *Hypotheſis*, this particular perſon ſubmits his Faith to no viſible Authority upon Earth whatever, nor does not acknowledg any of them all to be infallible.

But this Objection does nothing but confound the matter; for what ſignifies this difference to the matter we are treating of? Does it at all mitigate the inconvenience there is in affirming, That plain private men, how ignorant ſoever, may underſtand God's Word better than all the Learned *Sorbon*, or a whole Council of all *France*, or than the Pope of *Rome* himſelf? Does it convey more light and apprehenſion to theſe particular men, or make the meaning of God's Word one jot eaſier to them? Does it make this ſetting up of themſelves to be no Pride, granting that endeavouring to ſecure ones own Faith and Salvation by ones own judgment is ſo? Will not the *Sorbon* Convocations, the National Councils, and the Popes, be continually crying out, that ſuch men are guilty of raſhneſs, and intolerable preſumption, in fancying, That they may underſtand the ſenſe of the Catholick Church better than all Them? M. *de Meaux* will Reply, That he does not mean ſingle private men ſhould take upon them to examine after the *Sorbon*, nor after a National Council, and much leſs then after a Pope, though he be not believed Infallible; and that he intends this Examination ſhould be reſerved for a General Council. Very well. But till there come a General Council, what

what muſt theſe particular men do? Put the caſe, that the Pope for inſtance, hath delivered true or falſe deciſions in Articles of Faith, and hath enjoined theſe to be accordingly believed and practiſed, upon pain of being Anathematized, and incurring the Diſpleaſure of St. *Peter*, and St. *Paul*, as their Decrees commonly run; What is to be done? Muſt men refuſe to act according to theſe Deciſions, till ſuch time as a General Council hath either ratified, or reformed them? Or muſt they act as they direct, till further order be taken? The Firſt courſe falls under the ſame inconvenience, that M. *de Meaux* hath clamoured ſo much againſt; every particular Perſon, though never ſo ignorant, will be obliged to think he may underſtand the Word of God, and the ſence of the Catholick Church, better than the Pope of *Rome*, and all his followers; for did he think otherwiſe, he would without any ſcruple ſubmit to his Orders. The Second is abſurd; for whoever heard of believing for a time, and till order be taken? And if that deciſion were Heretical, ought a man to turn Heretick at a cheap rate, and by way of Proviſion?

As for the charge of Pride, upon which M. *de Meaux* ſtill inſiſts, I will with his good leave take the confidence to ſay, 'Tis as idle a thing as can be in the World. I had before ſaid in the Conference, That what this Prelate calls Pride in us, does only proceed from the freedom of God's diſpenſation, who gives his Holy Spirit to whom he pleaſes, and very often to ſuch as are but meanly eſteemed, excluding what the opinion of men accounts greateſt, according to what Jeſus Chriſt hath taught us, in that memorable paſſage: *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, becauſe thou haſt hid theſe things from the Wiſe and Prudent, and haſt revealed them unto Babes.* M. *de Meaux* may think his pleaſure; but this is a ſubſtantial anſwer. It is no pride in any Believer, though never ſo plain, and never ſo much a Babe, humbly to beg of God ſuch knowledg, as is neceſſary for his Salvation, and to hope that God will grant it him, though he ſhould at the ſame time deny it to perſons of the higheſt Honour and Dignity in the Church. Matt. 11. 25.

Moſes was not a Preacher of Pride, when he ſaid to the *Iſraelites*: *What Nation is there ſo great, which hath God ſo nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for?* Nor was *David* a Preacher of Pride, when he ſaid to the ſame purpoſe, *God ſheweth his Word unto* Jacob, *his Statutes and Judgments unto* Iſrael. *He hath not dealt ſo with any Nation, and as for his Judgments they have not known them.* And in another place, *The ſecret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will ſhew them his Covenant.* The bleſſed Virgin did not think of inſpiring men with Pride, when ſhe ſaid, that *God putteth down the mighty from their ſeats, and exalteth them of low degree.* That *he fills the Hungry with* Deut. 4. 7. Pſal. 147. 19, 20. Pſal. 25. 14. Luk. 1. 52, 53.

Matt. 13. 11. Joh. 17. 17. Jam. 1. 5, 6. *good things, and ſends the rich empty away.* Jeſus Chriſt inſpired no pride, when he told his Diſciples, *To you it is given to know the Myſteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to them it is not given. If any man will do the will of my Father, he ſhall know of my Doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I ſpeak of my ſelf.* Nor St. *James*, when he ſaid, *If any of you lack wiſdom, let him ask of God that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it ſhall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering.* What Pride is it to believe, that God does not reſpect mens perſons, but diſtributes his Graces of illumination as he pleaſes, and to whom he thinks good?

Beſides this anſwer which Chriſtianity furniſhes us with, it is evident, that even in matters of Civil Converſation, and ſuch as are known either by natural or acquired abilities, it is no pride at all to examine after perſons, who are eſteemed very ſufficient; but withal ſuch, as we think it not utterly impoſſible, ſhould either be impoſed upon themſelves, or endeavour to impoſe upon us. Shall a man of an Eſtate be called proud, becauſe he hath a mind to take an exact account of his Buſineſs himſelf, and does not wholly refer himſelf to his Steward, whom yet he believes much better verſed in thoſe things than he? It is pride in a man that hath a ſuit depending, to examine after his Lawyers, and inform himſelf particularly of their determinations, and their reaſons, though he hath never ſo great an opinion of their abilities? It is pride in us to offer to judg of the nature and quality of the Meat that is brought to our Table, though we are very ſenſible, that the perſons who chuſe and dreſs it, underſtand it a great deal better? 'Tis a natural, primary and indiſputable right, that every one hath, to know the things which properly and perſonally concern him; the right others pretend to in this caſe, can be ſo no further than it is communicated, it is a right derived from the other, and hath a conſtant dependance upon it. So far are we then from being guilty of pride, in going about to examine after others, what thus nearly concerns us, that on the contrary, not to do it, would be a negligence highly ſinful; eſpecially ſuppoſing, as we by our Principle do, that theſe others are not endued with any ſuch thing as Infallibility; and it would be the moſt intolerable injuſtice in others, to endeavour to deprive us of this right of examining; when our own concerns are in agitation, we have the firſt call and obligation to intereſt our ſelves; the call which others have, is but a ſecondary one, and taken into our Aſſiſtance, and being a ſecondary and auxiliary one, it muſt for that very reaſon allow the original one to continue ſtill.

This then is only a cunning fetch made uſe of to rob Believers of their Rights, to enſlave their Conſciences, and get to themſelves the

dominion over their Faith. Under this falſe pretence of pride, they throw them into negligence, and by that negligence they bring them into ſlavery. Indeed, if our temporal concerns lay at ſtake, this loſs might be endured; but the Truth of God is concerned, the higheſt of all our duties, the ſalvation of our Souls; And what recompence can be made a Man for ſuch loſſes as theſe? I confeſs it is very taking, to find out a way of excuſing men from trouble of living in a perfect unconcernedneſs as to matters of Religion, and to refer themſelves entirely to their Guides for them. And for this reaſon, I do not queſtion but abundance of men in the World would be better pleaſed with M. *de Meaux* his principle, than ours, becauſe that ſuits their inclination. They deſire no better, than to be excuſed from a ſtudy that would coſt them pains, and upon that account can be very well content, that M. *de Meaux* ſhould call that Pride, which we call the indiſpenſable duty of every Chriſtian. But this very conſideration ought to make men ſuſpicious of his Principle.

Moreover it appears by all I have now ſaid, that M. *de Meaux* miſtook himſelf again, when he look'd upon what he met with in my Relation, to be an acknowledgment of his Conſequence, *viz.* That every particular perſon is obliged, after every Eccleſiaſtical Aſſembly, to examine whether it hath underſtood God's Word well, or no. There is a mighty difference between ſaying, A man ought to examine with a deſign to inform himſelf, whether an Aſſembly hath underſtood God's Word well; and ſaying, That men ſhould examine with a perſwaſion, that they may underſtand God's Word better than an Aſſembly that hath underſtood it well already. The firſt propoſition is what I advanced in the Conference, and will always be a wiſe Man's aim, who ſeeks the true Church, that he may cleave to her. The ſecond, which M. *de Meaux* fixes upon me, can be no bodies but an extravagant fellow's that knows not what he ſays, and would undertake to amend what he owns to be well done already. I obſerve too, by the way, that in this pretended acknowledgment which M. *de Meaux* will have me make in theſe words, That *there is not any abſurdity, nor any pride in a perſon's believing that he may underſtand God's Word better than all Eccleſiaſtical Aſſemblies, what good Order ſoever is kept in them, and of whatſoever Perſons they may be compoſed.* That laſt clauſe, of *whatſoever Perſons they may be compoſed*, are purely his own addition; I never told him any thing like it, nor will any ſuch thing be found in my Relation. *Meaux's* Eng. Reflect. p. 65.

Here the Prelate tells us over again, a Story which *Monſieur Maimbourg* had told before concerning the Synod of *Dort*, and from thence endeavours to deduce ſome things that may illuſtrate his pretended Conſequence, *Meaux's* Engliſh Reflect. p. 65.

P. 65, 66. quence, after which he concludes in this manner: *I will maintain, That Mr.* Claude *being asked, whether any private person whatever, of his Church, may rely upon an Authority so great among them as this is, without examining any farther, if he be pressed to answer positively Yea, or No, to so precise a question, and in a fact so well circumstantiated, he must say No; and that in fine, notwithstanding all this, they were but men, how able, how illuminated, how holy soever they are imagined, still subject to fail, whose sentiments, if one should follow blindfold, and without examining, he would equal men to God. Thus,* adds he, *according to the Maxims of the New Reformation, every private person, even to the most ignorant woman, ought to believe that they can understand the Holy Scripture better than an Assembly composed of whatever is greatest in that whole Church which he acknowledges to be the only one where God is purely served, and not only better than this Assembly, but than all the rest of the Church, and than all that he knows in the whole Universe.*

Here again M. *de Meaux* falls into the same mistake that he hath done every where else; and never considers that the obligation every one lies under to examine, is proportioned to each man's advantages, and therefore with respect to the meanest and most ignorant; it is confined to things absolutely necessary to salvation, as I have already said: So that whatever we meet with in the Synod of *Dorts* decisions that is not of this kind, will not at all concern those ignorant women M. *de Meaux* mentions: These are only for persons of a larger capacity. I own indeed, these more understanding persons will undertake this examination, with a design to discover whether the Assembly did in truth judg according to the Word of God; and if it appear they did, then to submit to those decisions: But this infers nothing less, than pretending to understand God's Word better than the True Church. For the Synod of *Dort*, as well as all other Synods, might not have been the true Church, there is no other way of being satisfied that it is the True Church, but by this distinguishing Character, that it hath judged according to the Word of God, and this Character can never be certainly found out, but by Examining. So that it would be absurd to say men examine after the True Church; for when once a Man can with certainty suppose that it is the True Church, there is no further examination to be made, 'tis done already to our hands.

English. Reflect. page 66. *What I say of the Synod of* Dort (says M. *de Meaux*) *Mr.* Claude *and every other Minister will be forced to say of the Council of* Nice, *of the Council of* Constantinople, *of that of* Ephesus, *of that of* Chalcedon, *and the rest, which they and we receive with common accord: And when they shall say it, they will say nothing new or unusual in their Religion.* Calvin *said it in formal terms, speaking in general of all the Councils of the precedent Ages.*

I answer, 'Tis true, we receive the Councils of *Nice*, *Constantinople*, *Ephesus* and *Chalcedon*, for no other reason, but because we find them agreeable to the Word of God; and also because we do really find them agreeable to God's Word, we embrace them, and submit to them with abundance of respect. These holy Councils having submitted themselves to Scripture, never pretended that men ought to look upon them otherwise than in this subordination to, and dependance upon That. And for what concerns Mr. *Calvin*, consult but that very passage alledged by M. *de Meaux*, and that will shew he taught nothing but what we do now. ‖ *When*, says he, *the Authority of a Council is alledged, I desire first it may be considered, in what time, and for what cause it was assembled, and what persons assisted at it: Afterwards, that the principal point be examined according to the Rule of the Scripture; so that the Councils definition have its weight, and be as a prejudice, but that it hinder not the Examination.* The meaning of this is not, that we should first take it for granted they are the True Church, and afterwards descend to examination: But his meaning is, that we should inform our selves as punctually and particularly as we can, of the time, the occasion, and the persons, and their quality, that so we may entertain a just presumption, and as favourable as the Cause will bear; but that, if we would attain to an absolute certainty, we must of necessity go further, and look into the very decisions made by them. This is what *Calvin* would have done, this is also exactly the same that we contend for, and that reason requires; for there is not, in strict speaking, any thing besides this Essential Character, that puts a difference between true and false Councils.

Meaux's Eng. Reflect. p. 67.

‖ Quoties Concilii alicujus decretum profertur, expendi primum diligenter velim, quo tempore habitum sit, quâ de causâ habitum, & quo consilio, quales homines interfuerint; deinde illud ipsum de quo agitur ad Scripturæ amussim examinari, idq; in eum modum ut Concilii definitio pondus suum habeat, sitq; instar præjudicii; neq; tamen examen quod dixi impediat. *Calvin* Institut. Cap. 9. Sect. 8.

Thus much I thought fit to offer to Mr. *de Meaux*, for a proof that his Consequence is erroneous; The plausible advantages he gives it, and this insulting way of propounding it, obliged me to insist longer upon it than the thing deserved, and still we are not come to the end of this dispute neither. This Prelate does not only charge us with examining after the True Church, but he goes further, and lays at our door an opinion, that men should examine after the very Apostles, and Jesus Christ himself, and upon this subject he spends the remainder of his Reflection.

For

For what relates to the Apoſtles, he grounds his diſcourſe upon a paſſage in the Author of an Anſwer to his Expoſition, *This Anſwer*, ſays he, *is printed with the approbation of four Miniſters of* Charenton, *and the paſſage is writ in theſe Terms, That we do not ſee the Apoſtles publiſhed their Deciſion with an abſolute Order it ſhould be obeyed: But they ſent* Paul, Barnabas, *and* Silas, *for to inſtruct the Faithful to keep this Ordinance, that is, evidently to perſwade them the motives and grounds of it, which ſays not, that they were forbid to examine.*

Eng. Reflect. p 67, 68.

It is very ſtrange, that M. *de Meaux* ſhould ſo little regard the Juſtice of his accuſations. The meaning of this Author is plain. He does not ſay, that Believers were under an abſolute obligation to examine the Apoſtles deciſions, or that in ſtrictneſs they ought not to receive them upon their Authority; but the thing he ſays is, that the Apoſtles never prohibited this Examination, and that the deciſion they gave at *Jeruſalem* was not publiſhed by them with an abſolute command of obedience. He forms in this place an Argument by way of Compariſon; and his meaning is, That if the Apoſtles themſelves, notwithſtanding they were ſufficiently aſſured of their own Infallibility, did not however require this blind implicit ſubmiſſion to their Doctrine, much leſs ought the Councils of the *Romiſh* Church to require it, upon whom the Holy Ghoſt never deſcended in the form of fiery tongues, as he had upon the Apoſtles. If M. *de Meaux* had but conſulted his ſecond thoughts here, he would have found, that this Author's Obſervation is as true as any thing in the World can be; for beſides what he has urged in proof of it, does not St. *Paul* tell the *Corinthians*, *That he ſpoke unto them, as unto wiſe men, and that they ſhould judg what he ſaid?* In another place he ſays, *That he commended himſelf to every man's Conſcience in the ſight of God, by manifeſtation of the Truth.* And afterwards, that, *as he had manifeſted himſelf to God by bringing men to the Faith, he truſted alſo to be made manifeſt to their Conſciences.* And again in another place, *That he took men to record, That he had declared unto them all the Counſel of God.* A great many other ſuch Texts there are, that ſhew the Truth of what this Author hath ſaid, That the Apoſtles never forbad an Examination, nor rigorouſly required this blind obedience which the Church of *Rome* does.

1 Cor. 10. 15.
2 Cor. 4. 2.
2 Cor. 5. 11.
Acts 20. 26, 27.

When M. *de Meaux* ſhall pleaſe to conſider his ſubject a little more carefully than he has done hitherto, he will find, that as there is a ſort of examination, that cannot be reconciled with an abſolute Authority, ſo there is likewiſe another by no means inconſiſtent with, or prejudicial to it. A Maſter gives his Servant peremptory Orders about the buſineſs of his Family, and a King as abſolute ones to his Subjects about affairs of State; but yet it often happens, that they do it in ſuch a method as is

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not only authoritative, but perſwaſive too. Do they by this means recede from their Authority? Not in the leaſt. But the reaſon of this is, that their Commands are ſo juſt and reaſonable, that they deſire the perſons under their Government may themſelves acknowledg that they are ſo; and to this purpoſe, they take a more gentle winning way, a way more agreeable to mens nature, and which will render their obedience more cheerful and pleaſant. We muſt therefore put a difference between ſuch an Examination, as implies men are not ſatisfied that what is taught them is juſt and true, and which is deſigned to clear that doubt; and ſuch a one as ſuppoſes men perſwaded of that, and is undertaken only for more full information, and the ſtrengthening them in their Faith. It is granted on all hands, that the Apoſtles Doctrine was not ſubject to the firſt ſort of theſe Examinations, with reſpect to Believers; becauſe they already owned the Authority and Infallibility of theſe Divine perſons, and this was a ſuppoſition, which they never pretended to queſtion afterwards. But it does not follow from thence, that they were barred from all Examination, nor that the Apoſtles themſelves would not be very well pleaſed, when they ſhould examin the other way; that is, with a deſign to inform, and confirm themſelves. That what they received upon the judgment of their Authority and Infallibility, they might receive alſo, by the impreſſion which the truth of the things themſelves would make upon them, and by the proper and immediate perſwaſion of their own Conſciences. This is what St. *Paul* terms, *The approving of every man's Conſcience*; this the teſtimony which he deſired ſhould be given him of the Faithful; and for this Reaſon it is, that Faith is called in Scripture, *a Knowledge, an enlightning the Eyes of the Underſtanding, an imprinting the Laws of God in the Soul, an Opinion, a Taſt, an Odour of Life, a Demonſtration of the Spirit and of Power, and an Unction which teaches us all things.* God himſelf would have us examine his Laws, and his ways thus; Not to call his Authority in queſtion, for this would be the moſt heinous Crime we could poſſibly be guilty of; but that we may to our Opinion of his Supream Authority over us, add that of his Laws and his Ways being Juſt and True, and Good, and ſo be our ſelves wrapt with Love and Admiration of them.

Upon this account it is, that he argues the Caſe with us in Scripture; that he offers to plead his own rights with us, and deſires we ſhould judg of them, and that he enjoins us to conſider, and meditate upon his Myſteries, and to compare his word with of that men; to the intent we may be convinced of the difference. When Authority is attended with Truth and Juſtice, ſuch an examination is ſo far from impairing, that it ſtrengthens and fixes it more and more; *for the Throne is eſtabliſhed by Righteouſneſs,* Prov. 16. 12.

Righteouſneſs ſays *Solomon*. But when men grow ſenſible, that things will not bear being lookt into, and begin to fear that their counterfeit alloy ſhould be diſcovered, when brought to the Touch; then it is, that Authority cannot away with any Examination, and muſt put out the Eyes of the World, to keep them in their obedience. Now the Apoſtles knowing no ſuch fear, never betook themſelves to the uſe of ſuch wary Methods, they never forbad Examining; in proportion, as they taught Believers the Secrets of God, they likewiſe deſired, they ſhould be filled themſelves with
Col. 2. 2. *the Riches of the full aſſurance of underſtanding*; *and that the Word might*
Col. 3. 16. *dwell in them richly in all Wiſdom*, to uſe their own Expreſſions; and proportionably as they told men, God had brought Light into the World, they likewiſe taught them to open their Eyes, and to walk as Children of Light. Thus M. *de Meaux* could not poſſibly do any thing more againſt himſelf, than to cry out upon that paſſage of the Author we have now been treating of; and that Author could not poſſibly have brought any ſtronger or more convincing Argument againſt the Church of *Rome*, than the Example of the Apoſtles, which ought upon more accounts than one, make them bluſh who go in a contrary way, and deliver themſelves in another ſort of Language.

Let us come now to conſider the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt, at the time when he was upon Earth. M. *de Meaux* pretends, that we are of opinion, men ought to have examined after him too; and as this Accuſation is the moſt heinous; ſo is the Cheat he puts upon us in it, the moſt palpable that can be. Obſerve what he proceeds upon. To prove that the Principle of a blind and implicite obedience to Eccleſiaſtical Aſſemblies, was a falſe and deſtructive Principle, I had in our Conference alledged the inſtance of the *Jewiſh* Synagogue aſſembled, who had condemned Jeſus Chriſt for an Impoſtor, and held that the Miracles he wrought, he wrought them by *Beelzebub*; from whence I had inferred; That if M. *de Meaux* his Principle took place, *viz.* That private perſons have no right to examine after Aſſemblies, and that it would be intolerable pride in them to attempt it, then Jeſus Chriſt ought not to have addreſt himſelf to the People for their Converſion, nor ought the People have heard him, much leſs ſtill have believed in him; ſo that M. *de Meaux* his Principle perfectly overthrew Chriſtian Religion, and ſtifled it in its very Birth.

Monſieur M. *de Meaux* had anſwered, *That there was then upon Earth a living and ſpeaking Authority, and the greateſt that ever was in the World*; *even that of Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, to whom God gave Teſtimony from Heaven, and who wrought Miracles.* To this I replied, That it was that very Supream and Infinite Authority of Jeſus Chriſt, which the Aſſemblies of the Synagogue

gogue had condemned; so that if M. *de Meaux* his Principle had prevailed, the People could not look upon Jesus Christ, as any other than an Impostor, according to the declared Opinion of the Church; nor upon his Miracles, as any better than illusions of the Devil, because the People would not have been suffered to examine at all, after the decision then already given. And it must not be said, That Jesus Christ's Authority decided the Question; for an Authority can decide nothing, till it be first received and acknowledged; and that Jesus Christ's was not as yet; for the very thing in Controversy was, Whether they should receive it, or reject it.

Thus far then it is evident, that the business to be enquired into, is not to know, whether the Synagogue did well in condemning Jesus Christ's Miracles, and rejecting his Authority, my Argument supposes quite contrary, that it was the most horrible sin they could commit; nor to know, whether according to our Principle, the People ought to reject Jesus Christ's Miracles and Authority; my whole Argument looks quite the other way, and is designed to shew, that they ought to have done what they did, that is, refuse obedience to the judgment of the Church, and come over to Jesus Christ. But the only thing we are concerned to know is, how they ought to have behaved themselves after this judgment, according to M. *de Meaux*'s Principle, which says, they ought to examine after the Assemblies. I assert, That they could not, proceeding upon that Principle, look upon Jesus Christ any otherwise than an Impostor, nor upon his Miracles to be any better than Juggles and Conjurations; because the Assembly had determined that they were such. Whereupon I concluded *M. de Meaux* his Principle to be false and destructive of the Christian Religion.

This was my Opinion, and thus I argued. Now let us see what followed. First of all M. *de Meaux* confidently affirms, That he heard nothing of all this Reply in the Conference. I make no Reflections upon that, he is Master of his own Ears. I shall only say, There was nothing in all this, nothing that he might not have seen before, in the Defence of the Reformation. But however, let us observe what he urges against it now. *It were indeed better*, says he, *to be silent, than to say such things: But since Mr.* Claude *will have said them, he must then also say, That because Jesus Christ's Miracles were rejected as deceitful Signs, by the Envious, by the Obstinate, in one word, by the declared Enemies of the Truth; these Miracles were not convincing enough to oblige men to believe Jesus Christ on his word, without examining further; and that for example, after he had raised* Lazarus *in express Testimony that God had sent him, those that beheld with their Eyes so great a Miracle, were, I do not say permitted, but expressly obliged to examine, Whether Jesus Christ were sent by God. He must I say, carry the necessity of*

English Reflect. Pag. 69.

English Reflect. Pag. 69. 70.

the Examen to this Excess; otherwise, 'twill be true, as I have said, That there was then a visible and palpable Authority, to which every one ought to submit without examining, so that there was never any time when men were less exposed to the Temptation of Pride, by elevating themselves above all living and speaking Authority, since Jesus Christ, the most Living, and most speaking, as well as the greatest and most infallible that ever was, was then on the Earth; and that they preferred not themselves before the Synagogue, but by submitting to Jesus Christ, whose miracles as himself said, took away all Excuse from those that believed not in him: which the Assembly that condemned him, knew so well, that obstinately refusing to believe in Jesus Christ, they found no other answer to his Miracles, nor any other means to resist him, but to make him away, and with him Lazarus *also, to stifle if they could at once with the Miracles they had seen, the Memory of him that wrought them.*

Thus it is that he takes off the objection, after which he falls to crying up Jesus Christ's Sovereign Authority, to shew the force and the Divinity of his Miracles, and the obstinacy of the *Jewish* Synagogue, in that they refused to own and receive him.

I must frankly confess, That I never met with any Answer to compare to this. There are Three things remarkable in it; the First is, That it never touches the main difficulty at all. The Second, That it makes for our Cause, and against M. *de Meaux's*. The Third, That it deduceth the most wretched Consequence in the World, to contrive a Topick of Accusation against Us.

I say, It never comes up to the main difficulty; for, as I just now made the case plain, our business is not to enquire, what the People ought to have done absolutely speaking, nor what they ought to have done according to the Principle I maintain; but to enquire how they ought to have behaved themselves upon Mr. *Meaux* his Principle; that is, after the Synagogue had solemnly declared, That Jesus Christ's Miracles were illusions of the Devil, and that he himself was a wicked man, and a seducer. Now this is what the Answer says not one word to. To say, That the Synagogue at that time was composed of Envious, Obstinate persons, and such as were declared Enemies of the Truth, is but telling us what we all knew before; but it is no answer at all. To say, That Jesus Christ was a Living and Speaking Authority, the Greatest and most Infallible that ever appeared upon Earth; and that it was no pride for men in obedience to him, to disobey the Synagogue, is also to tell us what none of us are ignorant of; but still this is no answer. To say, That Jesus Christ's Miracles were such as left all who did not believe in him without excuse, and that they were convincing enough, to oblige men to believe him upon his own word, is to say

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ſomething indeed, but it does not remove the difficulty. To take off that, a man muſt ſhew which way thoſe private perſons, who according to M. *de Meaux*'s Principle had believed that they might with a ſafe Conſcience, nay, and ought to obey the Synagogues deciſions implicitly, and that it was really a fault to pretend to exâmine afterwards; which way I ſay, they could, without going againſt this Principle, receive Jeſus Chriſt as the Son of God, and his Miracles as Divine Operations, after that the Synagogue had pronounced him an Impoſtor, and his Miracles the work of Beelzebub. A man muſt ſhew, how a People, who according to this Principle ought not to have any other Eyes than thoſe of the Synagogue, nor entertain any Opinion but theirs, could poſſibly look upon Jeſus Chriſt and his Miracles, any otherwiſe than the Synagogue had done, without entrenching on this Principle. Say as long as you pleaſe, that there was in Jeſus Chriſt's Miracles a full demonſtration of the Power of God, and a manifeſt atteſtation of his being ſent by him, that there could be nothing elſe in oppoſing them, but the moſt palpable Malice, and plain obſtinacy; I do not only agree with you in all this, but I will ſay it more than you. This is not the pinch of the Queſtion. Jeſus Chriſt was a living and a ſpeaking Authority, the greateſt and moſt infallible that ever was upon the Earth, for his Authority was Divine, he proved, and confirmed it by ſuch Miracles as of right ought upon their own accounts to have been received without any further Examination. All this is granted. But ſtill the Synagogue had condemned theſe Miracles, and diſallowed his Authority, and according to M. *de Meaux* his Principle, their condemning them, ought to have made both the Authority, and the Miracles of no Effect, and have been a Bar to the People's receiving them. This is the main Objection, this the point to be anſwered. Our Buſineſs is not to know, Whether they might or might not renounce the Authority of the Church, to own another; it is evident they were obliged to acknowledg Jeſus Chriſt's. But we are concerned to know, ſuppoſing them to have been of a perſwaſion, that a perfect and abſolute obedience was due to the Synagogue, which way theſe men could notwithſtanding without breach of duty, acquieſce in thoſe Miracles which the Synagogue had condemned, and ſubmit to an Authority that the Church had rejected; according to M. *de Meaux* his Principle, the People muſt never take upon them to judg after the Church, nor admit any Opinion but hers. If they do, 'tis a moſt unconceivable Pride, 'tis giving an occaſion of horrible Conſequences, of hideous and deteſtable Tenets. How then could that People, this Principle ſtill remaining inviolate, believe that there was a full demonſtration of the power of God in Jeſus Chriſt's Miracles, or any

evident confirmation of his being ſent from God; and upon this belief embrace and own his Authority; that is, in plain terms, act in direct contradiction to the Judgment of their Church? This is the knotty point, which M. *de Meaux* his Anſwer gives no ſolution at all of. And in ſhort, it cannot be anſwered, but by reconciling this Biſhops principle, with the behaviour of thoſe Jews that were converted to Jeſus Chriſt, and making it appear, that this Converſion of theirs was perfectly conſiſtent with this Principle. This is what I expect M. *de Meaux* ſhould make out, but what he never will be able to do.

But this is not all; for it is plain, that his anſwer does really make for our Cauſe, as I ſaid before, and againſt this Prelates own. Here we have an Aſſembly as to the form of it unexceptionable, which nevertheleſs out of a plain and a palpable Malice and obſtinacy, falls into the moſt criminal fundamental Error in the World.

Here we have likewiſe a People and private perſons, who, notwithſtanding the judgment and determination of that Aſſembly, are wrought upon by the Evidence of Jeſus Chriſt's Miracles, and venture to believe their own apprehenſions, which ſuggeſt to them that theſe Miracles are Divine. Theſe men do not only judg after the Synagogue, but expreſly contrary to it; they diſingage themſelves from it; and to uſe M. *de Meaux* his own Phraſe, prefer themſelves before it, and do of their own heads acknowledg Jeſus Chriſt, and ſubmit to him. Thoſe Aſſemblies then are not infallible, whatever form or order may be obſerved in them; malice and obſtinacy may blind them, their Authority is not ſo abſolute, and full, as never to be oppoſed; their deciſions are ſubject to Examination, and every Believer is allowed without being preſently guilty of Pride or Preſumption, to think, that in ſome certain caſes he may underſtand God's Word better than all, even the moſt Univerſal Aſſemblies. It ſignifies nothing to alledge what M. *de Meaux* ſomewhere does, *That the very Moment of the Synagogues fall was clearly markt out by the Scriptures and the Prophets.* For what does this but ſtrengthen my Aſſertion, and give me an opportunity of affirming ſtill more vehemently, that theſe Eccleſiaſtical Aſſemblies may fall, ſince the Scriptures and the Prophets had *clearly markt out* the fall of ſuch Aſſemblies in the Synagogue?

Meaux's Engliſh Conf. page 30.

The Conſequence will be, That every particular perſon keeping in proſpect this fall, as a thing which not only might, but would certainly come to paſs, was obliged to examine, and not pay an unconditional obedience. It was not then at that time any Equivocation, any Illuſion, or mental Reſervation, to have a Condition underſtood. Every man was then obliged to believe, that he might underſtand the Word of God better than the moſt Univerſal Aſſembly, and all the reſt of the Church

Church together. It was neither an argument of pride or rashness to believe so, nor was this any hideous, or detestable Tenet. But this, you will say, could never happen but once. In the first place, 'tis absurd to restrain such an accident to one time, since there are so many other instances of the Synagogues having prevaricated. But granting it never to have happened but once; I say, that even this were enough to oblige Believers to keep their Eyes open, that so they might not be surprised when this one instance should happen; and besides, that my conclusions will still be good and strong; for a thing that is at any one time just, and pious, and commendable, cannot be in its own nature either hideous, or detestable, or full of pride and rashness.

Further; If it were lawful and just to judg after the Synagogue, without incurring the inconveniences mentioned by M. *de Meaux*, upon this supposition, that it should at some one time fall into Error; it will be every whit as just and lawful for us to judge always after the Assemblies of the *Latin* Church, without incurring the same inconveniences: Because we do it only upon this supposition, that those Assemblies are no time infallible, but that they may at any time wander out of the right way. Upon this principle it is, that we ground our right and our obligation to judge after them. Whether this principle be true or false, is a distinct question, which M. *de Meaux* may discourse upon when he thinks fit; but if you suppose the Principle the Consequence cannot be disputed; the instance of those who lived under the Synagogue, and examined after it for that reason, because it was to fall, will justifie that. M. *de Meaux* therefore should have begun with the proof of the *Latin* Assemblies being infallible first, and when that point had been gained, he might have been allowed to declaim against the inconveniences that would follow, by mens undertaking to examine after infallible Guides. But till then, we have a common right, which, by supposing those Assemblies liable to mistakes, does upon this very account oblige every man to examine after them: And for as much as a thing of common right cannot become evil, unless it be by virtue of some particular exception, which makes the practice of the thing irregular, it will lye upon M. *de Meaux* to prove, not the Infallibility of those *Latin* Assemblies by his pretended inconveniences, but quite contrary, his pretended inconveniences by the Infallibility of the *Latin* Assemblies; because they cannot take place nor are any objection against us, except by virtue of some privileg peculiar to those Assemblies.

There was then, says Monsieur *de Meaux*, *a visible and palpable Authority, to which every one ought to submit without examining; so that there was never any time, when men were less exposed to the temptation of pride, by elevating them-* Eng. Reflect. p. 70.

themſelves above all living and ſpeaking Authority; ſince Jeſus Chriſt, the moſt living, and moſt ſpeaking, as well as the greateſt, and moſt infallible that ever was, was then on the Earth, and that they preferred not themſelves before the Synagogue, but by ſubmitting to Jeſus Chriſt, whoſe miracles, as himſelf ſaid, took away all excuſe from thoſe that believed not in him. I ſay again, that this is clearly advancing our Cauſe, and overthrowing his own. Firſt then, It may ſo happen, that Eccleſiaſtical Aſſemblies may be in a ſtate of real and formal oppoſition againſt the ſupreme Authority of Jeſus Chriſt.

For if this happened even at ſuch a time, when Jeſus Chriſt was upon Earth in perſon, when his Authority was a living, and ſpeaking, a viſible and palpable Authority; when it was confirmed too by the moſt convincing Miracles; It is much more reaſonable to ſuppoſe the ſame may happen now, ſince Jeſus Chriſt hath left the Earth, ſince that his Miracles have ceaſed, and that he ſpeaks to us only by his Scriptures, which M. *de Meaux* calls, *A word that ſuffers it ſelf to be explicated and managed how one will, and makes no Reply to thoſe that miſunderſtand it.* If God ſuffered once the whole viſible Church, to ſpeak in M. *de Meaux* his ſtile, the only viſible Church at that time in the World, to fall into ſo plain and palpable malice and obſtinacy, as to queſtion the truth of our Saviour's Miracles, although they carried along with them a full demonſtration of his Divine Power, and ſo evident a confirmation of his being ſent from God, that every reaſonable man was obliged to yield to it, without any further enquiry; If he did, I ſay, then ſuffer a blindneſs, ſo contrary, not only to the light of his Holy Spirit, but even to that of Reaſon too, thereby to give us an eminent inſtance of the weakneſs and corruption of Man; How can we be ſure of other Aſſemblies, who are nothing near in ſuch advantagious Circumſtances? Secondly, If this happened even then, when Jeſus Chriſt was come down upon Earth, it is from hence evident, his pleaſure was, that the Faith of his firſt Diſciples ſhould not have any dependence upon the Churches Authority, and conſequently, that he was pleaſed to make himſelf own'd and received in the World, by diſannulling this pretended Authority of ſuch Aſſemblies. It is from hence alſo evident, that the Spirit which made the firſt Chriſtians, effected this by opening the eyes of each particular perſon, and bringing them to ſuch an acknowledgment of his being the true *Meſſiah*, as proceeded purely and immediately from themſelves. Now this is to confeſs, in one word, that the Chriſtian Religion owes its birth, not to Monſieur *de Meaux*'s Principle, which would have ſmothered it in its very Cradle, but to the *Proteſtants* Principle; and that it is by this means that it came to light. And need any more be ſaid then, to confound all the black odious Repreſentations which M. *de Meaux* would fix upon

Eng. Conf. p. 31.

upon us for this, and to convince us on the contrary, that this is a holy and a juſt principle, ſince Jeſus Chriſt himſelf made uſe of it for the eſtabliſhment of his Goſpel? Laſtly, Being it was not at all ill done of thoſe *Jews*, to prefer themſelves before the Synagogue for the ſubmitting to Jeſus Chriſt, when he was a living and ſpeaking Authority, and ſuch a one as was confirmed by Miracles; neither will it be ill done in men to prefer themſelves before Eccleſiaſtical Aſſemblies, provided this be done in order to ſubmitting to Jeſus Chriſt, living and ſpeaking to us in his Scriptures, which we acknowledg to be Divine, and not to ſtand in any need of a new confirmation by Miracles. The reaſon why men were obliged at that time to ſubmit to him, was not merely becauſe his perſon appeared upon Earth, but becauſe his Authority was Divine, and above all. Now this Authority is not leſs Divine, or leſs ſupreme, at this day in his Scriptures; therefore it ſtill requires of us at this day the like ſubmiſſion; and that we ſhould, as they did then, prefer it before the Authority of all Aſſemblies whatever, when it happens that theſe two claſh with one another. And ſince there is not in nature any impoſſibility but this may happen, and we cannot at any time be ſure that it ſhall not happen; we are for this reaſon under a perpetual obligation to examine the deciſions of ſuch Aſſemblies.

The third thing remarkable in M. *de Meaux* his Anſwer is, that he draws a moſt wretched conſequence from my way of arguing, thereby to contrive a Topick of accuſation againſt me. Mr. *Claude*, ſays he, *muſt alſo ſay, that becauſe Jeſus Chriſt's Miracles were rejected as deceitful ſigns, by the envious, by the obſtinate, in one word, by the declared enemies of the Truth; Theſe Miracles were not convincing enough to oblige men to believe Jeſus Chriſt on his word, without examining farther; and that for example, after he had raiſed* Lazarus *in expreſs Teſtimony that God had ſent him, thoſe who beheld with their Eyes ſo great a Miracle, were, I do not ſay permitted, but expreſly obliged to examine, whether Jeſus Chriſt was ſent by God.* Eng Reflect. p. 69, 70.

I ſay, that this Conſequence could not poſſibly have been worſe contrived; for it muſt of neceſſity either be no conſequence at all, or if it be, it muſt fall upon M. *de Meaux* himſelf, becauſe as I obſerved before, my Argument proceeds purely upon his Principle. The Synagogue declare their opinion, that Jeſus Chriſt's Miracles are wrought by Beelzebub, this is a matter of fact which the Goſpel informs us of. The people ought not to interpoſe their Judgment after the Synagogue have declared theirs, this is M. *de Meaux*'s principle applied to the Jewiſh Church. From thence I infer, that according to him, the people could not look upon Jeſus Chriſt's Miracles to be any better than falſe and deceitful ſigns, ſuch as *Moſes* had formerly warned the *Iſraelites* to beware of,

of; and that, becauſe this was the opinion of their Church, to which, according to him, they owed a blind implicit obedience. If it follow from this Argument, that Jeſus Chriſt's Miracles were not convincing enough to oblige men to believe him upon his word, without examining further, this muſt follow from his Principle, and not from mine. When my Principle is concerned, I ſhall argue quite contrary from it; for I ſhall ſay, the people were bound to examine the Synagogues deciſions, and judg in a manner different from them, when they have judged amiſs. But they did judg amiſs of the Miracles wrought by Chriſt, when they rejected and condemned them, And therefore the people were obliged to receive and own them, and at the ſame time to ſubmit to that Divine and Infallible Authority of Jeſus Chriſt, which theſe Miracles did eſtabliſh and confirm. Thus M. *de Meaux* his Conſequence does nothing elſe but juſtify me, and accuſe himſelf.

But the truth of the matter is, this pretended Conſequence does not follow either from his Principle or mine. The Queſtion in agitation betwixt us, concerns that examination which people ought, or ought not to make upon the deciſions of Aſſemblies. Allow my Principle, and it is plain the people were obliged to look upon the Synagogues condemning Jeſus Chriſt's Miracles, and Authority, as a raſh, ſacrilegious, and ungodly action, ſuch as could proceed from nothing but malice and paſſion, becauſe his Miracles carried ſuch viſible, illuſtrious, and evident marks of their being wrought by a Divine Power. The natural Conſequence is indeed, that the people ought to examine that deciſion of the Synagogue; but that, notwithſtanding the conviction of our Saviour's Miracles, they were obliged to examine over again after him, and not believe him upon his word, is a conſequence that no Man can charge upon my Principle without perfect dotage. Allow M. *de Meaux*'s Principle, and it is clear, the people ought to receive the Synagogues deciſion againſt Chriſt and his Miracles implicitely, and conſequently that they might not examine them any further. It is not eaſy now to apprehend from whence it is that M. *de Meaux* fetches his pretended conſequence, which hath no manner of connexion, either with his Principle, or mine.

Eng. Reflect. p 69. Mr. *Claude*, ſays he, *in his Relation ſays, That the Miracles of Jeſus Chriſt made one of the matters in Queſtion, That there were falſe Miracles, which* Moſes *in* Deuteronomy *adviſed the* Iſraelites *to take heed of; That the Synagogue had judged Jeſus Chriſt's Miracles to be done in the name of Beelzebub.* Have I ſaid any thing in all this that is not true and plain matter of fact? Or can M. *de Meaux* diſown it? Had not the Synagogue paſt ſuch a judgment? And is not the paſſage of *Moſes* in *Deuteronomy*, as I have related it? But did I ever tell him, that in my opinion, the Synagogue was in the

the right to do what they did? or that I thought they could with any juſtice apply that paſſage of *Deuteronomy* to Jeſus Chriſt's Miracles, which yet in all probability they made uſe of as a pretence for their proceedings? Not any thing like it. To what purpoſe then does he charge me with an opinion, that men ought to examine even after Jeſus Chriſt?

But, may ſome object, if you neither approve the Synagogues proceedings, nor their application of that paſſage in *Moſes* to Chriſt's Miracles, wherefore do you mention it? Or what advantage can you think to gain from it? I anſwer, that there are three reaſons why I made uſe of it: The firſt was, to ſhew M. *de Meaux* that admitting his Principle, it was impoſſible the people ſhould ever have received Jeſus Chriſt's authority, or acknowledged the Divine Power of his Miracles, and conſequently, that what he told us, of there being then a viſible and ſpeaking Authority, which was Jeſus Chriſt's, confirmed by Miracles, ſignified nothing; for, according to his principle, it was become utterly invalid and null. The Synagogue had called it in queſtion, they had taken occaſion to do ſo from that paſſage in *Deuteronomy*, they had condemned that and his Miracles; Wickedly and maliciouſly, it is true; but ſtill they had done it: And when it was once done, M. *de Meaux* his Principle would not allow the people to examine this action, that ſo they might diſcern the wickedneſs of it; but they muſt pay a blind obedience to it. This Principle therefore rendred both the Miracles and Authority of Chriſt void, and of no effect; and from thence I inferred, that it was a very ill principle, and deſtructive of the Chriſtian Religion.

My ſecond Reaſon was, becauſe in the Communion of the Church of *Rome*, theſe following propoſitions are generally held for true and Orthodox. *That it is a right belonging to the Church, to judge of the nature of Miracles; That, when the Church hath judged of them, the people may not, upon any pretence whatſoever, act in oppoſition to her judgment, but is bound to acquieſce in it; That, whenſoever upon any point of Doctrine, Miracles appear on one ſide, and the Churches Authority on the contrary part, men muſt renounce the Miracles, and keep themſelves cloſe to the Church and its Authority.* Thus much Father *Annat* a Jeſuit, and Confeſſor to His Majeſty, hath taught us, in a paſſage related by me in my Defence of the Reformation, and which I think not amiſs to repeat here. *The applying* (ſays he) *and directing of a Miracle, to prove the truth of a Doctrine that is condemned, is an undertaking ſo raſh and ſcandalous, that it deſerves to be puniſhed. There is never a Catholick in the World, that hath learnt his Creed, and underſtands it, who can be wrought into ſuch a perſwaſion. What? If the appearance of a Miracle ſhall be ſet in oppoſition to the Churches determinations, can any Man be* Annat. contre Miracle du Port Royal.

at a ſtand, or ſo much as doubt, whether it be better to diſclaim a Church that depends upon the truth of a Miracle, or deny the truth of a Miracle that relies upon the authority of the Church? St. Peter *hath inſtructed us long ago, what courſe we ſhould take upon ſuch an occaſion. He himſelf had been an Eye-witneſs of our Saviour's transfiguration, and the glory that he concealed under the veil of his paſſible and mortal ſtate, and yet he lays more ſtreſs upon obſcure Prophecies, than upon the clear and expreſs teſtimony of his own Eyes.* Habemus firmiorem propheticum Sermonem; *We have a more ſure word of Prophecy. The Churches Authority, which is in no reſpect leſs than that of the Prophets, daſhes in pieces all the reaſons that would ſhock it, and we muſt alledg for our ſelves in the Churches behalf, what St.* Peter *adds in behalf of the Prophets,* Cui bene facitis attendentes, *to which you do do well to take heed; employing all our attention and care, to underſtand what are really the Churches Opinions, and taking it off from all ſuch Miracles, and Arguments, as are offered to us, with a deſign of calling in queſtion what we know the Church hath determined.* Who does not plainly perceive, that, according to theſe Maxims, the Synagogue had full right and power, not only to take cogniſance of Jeſus Chriſt's Miracles, but to condemn them too, becauſe they did evidently oppoſe their ſentence of Condemnation, paſt upon our Saviour's Authority; and, according to the ſame Tenets, the people would have become guilty of a raſh, ſcandalous Action, and ſuch as deſerved to be puniſhed, when they oppoſed his Miracles to the Synagogues determination. It was therefore much to the purpoſe to ſhew that Monſieur *de Meaux* does but trifle with us, when he alledges Jeſus Chriſt's viſible and ſpeaking Authority, becauſe at the ſame time he maintains a Principle, which, in the latitude the Church of *Rome* allows it, does utterly overthrow this Authority.

My third Reaſon was, that I was deſirous to reduce M. *de Meaux* to one of theſe two ſtreights, either to deny that a Man may renounce the Churches Authority, when he hath the teſtimony of his own eyes to the contrary; or to confeſs it. Now by good fortune he has confeſt it, for all the certainty the people had of Jeſus Chriſt's Miracles, was only from the teſtimony of their own eyes, and yet, according to his Argument, this was convincing enough to warrant their going contrary to the Synagogue. He may be pleaſed to conſider what the meaning of this is, and what concluſions I ought to draw from it, in the buſineſs of the Euchariſt.

Eng. Reflect. p. 69. But, *In fine,* ſays this Prelate, *Mr.* Claude *affirms, that an Authority decides nothing, till it be firſt received, and that Jeſus Chriſt's was not ſo as yet, ſince 'twas in diſpute whether they ſhould receive it or reject it.* What have I ſaid in this which common ſenſe does not tell us, and which M. *de Meaux* him-

himſelf did not ſay upon the buſineſs of the *Bereans*, who examined what St. *Paul* taught by the Rule of Scripture? He anſwers, they had right to make ſuch Examination, *as not being in the Church, and ſo having as yet no Authority to regulate them.* I meddle not now with the poorneſs of that Anſwer, as if thoſe *Bereans* had not had among them the Synagogues Authority, which was their natural Church. It is enough for me, that M. *de Meaux* hath himſelf confeſt the truth of my aſſertion, *That an Authority can decide nothing till it be firſt received.* Now this is what his own Principle, had it been followed, would certainly have obſtructed, I mean, They could not receive this any other way, than by following their own underſtandings, and determining by a private and perſonal judgment, that his Miracles were of God, quite contrary to what their Church had determined. And this M. *de Meaux* his Principle, had it been retained, and obſerved, could never have ſuffered them to do. Eng. Conf. p. 33.

Thus my Argument ſtands ſtill firm and immovable, That the Doctrine which this Prelate vindicates and aſſerts, is a juſtification of thoſe who refuſed to believe in Jeſus Chriſt; that it condemns thoſe who did believe in him, that it utterly diſannulls the living and ſpeaking Authority of this Divine Saviour, tho it pretends to advance and eſtabliſh it; and laſtly, that it overthrows, and ſtrikes at the very root of the Chriſtian Religion. Let M. *de Meaux* now conſider, whether it be worth maintaining upon theſe terms.

The five following Reflections Examined, wherein M. de Meaux *treats of his ſecond Conſequence, That there is, according to our Tenet, a point of Time, in which a Chriſtian is obliged to doubt, whether the Scripture be inſpired by God; whether the Goſpel be a Truth, or a Fable; whether Jeſus Chriſt be a Deceiver, or a Teacher of the Truth.*

M. *de Meaux* in the account he gives of *Mademoiſelle de Duras* her Converſion, tells us, *That as ſoon as ſhe had heard this to be one of the conſtant Maxims of her Religion, That every private perſon, how ignorant ſoever, was obliged to believe, That he could underſtand the Holy Scripture better than all the Councils, and all the reſt of the Church together, ſhe ſeem'd aſtoniſht at this Propoſition; But,* ſays he, *I added, That there was yet believed in her Religion, ſomething far more ſtrange, which was, That there is a point of time, when a Chriſtian is obliged to doubt, whether the Scripture was inſpired* Eng. Conf. p. 15.

by God; whether the Goſpel is a Truth, or a Fable; whether Jeſus Chriſt was a Deceiver, or a Teacher of the Truth.

Conſidering how mighty and advantagious a ſecret it is, in order to proſeliting people, to be well skilled in working the World up to an aſtoniſhment in proper time and place, it cannot be thought ſtrange that M. *de Meaux* ſhould have tried the Expedient upon this occaſion. He was ſo wrapt with joy, to ſee the good ſucceſs of a former Phantome, that he thought the addition of a ſecond very neceſſary, to a Lady but ſlenderly inſtructed, and already under ſtrong preingagements; that ſo he might heighten in her mind an aſtoniſhment very aſſiſting to his deſign. By his favour, he muſt not take it ill, that I give his pretended Conſequences no better a term than Phantomes. I have very good ground for calling them ſo, becauſe like Phantomes they are concealed by the help of darkneſs, I mean his ambiguous and equivocating expreſſions; and like Phantomes too, tho they have no real ſubſtance or ſolidity, yet they have a very frightful figure. This we have ſeen already to be true of the firſt, by the examination we took it into; and we may be pretty confident that this other will be found to be of no better Character than that. That we may judge of it with ſome exactneſs, let us firſt take notice of the terms it is couched in: *There is*, ſays this Prelate, *a Point*; Who would not think this ſome point of Doctrine, or of Hiſtory, or ſome Command, or ſome Promiſe, or ſome Threatning, or ſome Prediction, or, in one word, ſome point of Religion? *A Point*, proceeds he, *in which a Chriſtian*, Who would not imagine this to mean every Chriſtian indifferently, without any diſtinction or degree, or of quality? *In which a Chriſtian is obliged*, Who would not take this for an obligation of duty, and ſuch as a Man muſt neceſſarily diſcharge in point of Conſcience, and upon penalty of damnation? *Obliged to doubt*; Who might not from hence fancy, that this argued there were Reaſons on both ſides, and Reaſons too almoſt of equal weight, ſuch as keep a Chriſtians mind in a perfect ſuſpenſe, and hinder him from inclining to either ſide of the Queſtion, whether the Scripture was inſpired by God? Whether the Goſpel be a Truth, or a Fable? Whether Jeſus Chriſt be a Deceiver, or a Teacher of the Truth? Was there ever a more frightful form ſeen? There is a *point* of Chriſtianity, in which, according to the Religion of *Proteſtants*, if a Chriſtian will diſcharge his duty conſcientiouſly, and not be guilty of a mortal ſin, he is obliged to doubt whether the Scripture be inſpired by God; whether the Goſpel be a Truth or a Fable: whether Jeſus Chriſt be a Deceiver, or a Teacher of the Truth. Here indeed, you may ſee a thing as able as any thing can be to put any one into a terrible fright, that is not acquainted with M. *de Meaux* his way of expreſſing himſelf.

The *French* is *il-y-a-un Point*, the words *of Time*, are added by the Tranſlator all along; ſo that the Original has an Ambiguity, which the Engliſh has not.

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But let us not part with our Courage upon ſuch eaſy Terms, let us ſee how much of reality there is under this figure, and to that purpoſe look into this Prelates Propoſition, as he himſelf hath reſtrained, and leſſened it. And firſt of all; this *Point* in diſpute, is no point of Religion, but only a *Point of Time.* Thus much himſelf hath given us to underſtand in his Third Reflection, *I aſſigned*, ſays he, *for this Point of Doubt, all the time, in which a Chriſtian, for what cauſe ſoever, hath not read the Scripture.* This point then is not any fixed-thing, or of conſtant continuance; it is only a certain time, which is preſently over the time; in which a Chriſtian hath not as yet read the Scripture, nor is at all inſtructed in the Doctrines of Chriſtianity; the time in which he hath not yet heard any mention of them. In the Second place, *the Chriſtian here*, is not any Chriſtian whatever, nor advanced to any pitch of Faith tho' never ſo high; it is a *Baptiſed* perſon, who hath no more Chriſtianity, than meerly what the Sacrament can confer upon him, who may poſſibly have received the Holy Ghoſt, and Faith infuſed; but one, who of himſelf hath not yet arrived at any actual knowledg of the Myſteries of Religion; M. *de Meaux* ſuppoſes it, *'Tis a Baptiſed Chriſtian, who hath neither read the Holy Scripture, nor heard it read. The debate between us is in general, concerning all thoſe that have not read the Holy Scriptures, of what Age ſoever they be, and what way ſoever they may have hapned not to have read it.* It is not therefore a perfect compleat Chriſtian, he is only ſo by that Title which his Birth and Baptiſm, and if you pleaſe, Faith infuſed have given him. As for the Obligation in diſpute, it is no Obligation of Duty; 'tis no more than a *certain Condition* in which according to our Tenets, men cannot make an Act of Faith upon the Scripture, becauſe they never yet read it, or heard it read. M. *de Meaux* tells us his meaning of it after this manner, *The Second Inconvenience*, ſays he, *is, that there is a-time, when a Baptiſed Chriſtian is not in Condition to make an Act of Faith upon the Holy Scripture; but that, whether he will or no, he ſhall find himſelf obliged to doubt, whether it be inſpired by God.* This Obligation then is but a condition of weakneſs and involuntary impotency, which cannot in any ſence be termed a duty, ſince on the contrary it is what men ought to lament, and groan under, and in proportion as they can bring themſelves to be ſenſible of it, and muſt endeavour withal imaginable ſpeed to get out o that ſtate. Laſtly, As to what concerns this *Doubt*, we muſt by no means fancy it to be either a ſuſpenſe, nor a wavering of the mind betwixt Affirmative and Negative, occaſioned by ſuch weighty Reaſons on both ſides, as keep the judgment equally balanced, and ſometimes incline it to favour the Affirmative part, ſometimes the Negative, which is yet what men uſually call a Doubting: M. *de Meaux* acknowledges that

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Engliſh Reflect. page 73.

Engliſh Conf. page 36. Engliſh Reflect. page 82.

Engliſh Reflect. page 64.

English Conf. page 42.

it is not ſo to be underſtood, and that his meaning by it is barely this, Not knowing whether a thing be or no. *To doubt*, ſays he, *is not to know whether a thing be or not; the Chriſtian of whom we ſpeak, knows not whether the Scripture be true or not. He is then in Doubt. Tell me what it is to doubt, but not to know, whether a thing be or no?* And thus all the Propoſition, which M. *de Meaux* lays to our charge, when it is once ſtript of its diſguiſe, and put into intelligible terms, according to the explanation he himſelf gives it, comes but to this; that there is a certain time, in which a Baptiſed perſon, but one who hath not any more Chriſtianity than Baptiſm, and at the moſt Faith infuſed, and who hath not as yet read, nor heard the Scripture, or that it is inſpired by God, cannot make any Act of Divine Faith upon it, becauſe he hath not hitherto any knowledge of it of himſelf; and this, according to him, ought to be termed a ſtate of doubting. And thus you ſee the mighty Myſtery which M. *de Meaux* dreſt up in theſe expreſſions, *That there is a Point, in which, according to them, a Chriſtian is obliged to doubt, whether the Scripture is inſpired by God; whether the Goſpel be a Truth or a Fable; whether Jeſus Chriſt be a Deceiver, or a Teacher of the Truth.* If I may not be allowed to call this a Phantome, I do not ſee what other name can well be given it.

Let us now, I pray you, lay aſide all theſe great odious words, and hideous repreſentations, under which this Prelate hath been pleaſed to expoſe this pretended Conſequence to view, and conſider in cool Blood, what part of that which remains ought to be own'd for ours, and what ought to be rejected and diſclaimed by us. We will own then for ours, this *Child*, or this *Perſon* of what Age ſoever M. *de Meaux* ſhall pleaſe to ſuppoſe him. I ſay of what Age ſoever he ſuppoſes him; for it is to no purpoſe for him to complain, *That Mr.* Claude *affects to reduce this diſpute to the Inſtruction of Children.* 'Tis a thing I do not at all think of. In the Conference indeed, Children only were ſpoken of, but the reaſon of this was, that M. *de Meaux* confined himſelf to them of his own accord, and I had no right to ſtretch his Argument beyond the terms he delivered it in. However whenever he ſhall be deſirous, that the debate betwixt us may be in general concerning all thoſe who have not read the Holy Scriptures, what Age ſoever he ſuppoſes them to be of, though it were as old as *Methuſalem*, he ſhall never find me oppoſe him in it; provided he agree withal, as in juſtice he muſt, that there be a conſtant regard had to ſuch differences as that Age may in all probability make in the Caſe. M. *de Meaux*, and I ſhall never quarrel about that; and therefore his Sixth Reflection, which conſiſts of nothing elſe but this unjuſt complaint, was perfectly uſeleſs and ſuperfluous. Neither ſhall the Title of *Chriſtian*

Meaux's Engliſh Reflect. page 82.

ſtian, which he gives to this baptiſed Perſon, make any difference betwixt us, if he will but agree to theſe Two conditions, which I look upon to be very reaſonble and juſt. The Firſt is, That he will not abuſe that name as he has done; and the other, that he will not lay down falſe ſuppoſitions from it, and ſuch as are contrary to right reaſon. 'Tis a plain abuſe of this name, to make uſe of it for the bringing in ſtrange exaggerations, which are good for nothing but to catch and amuſe the Populacy: *It is an horrible thing*, ſays he, *that a Baptiſed Chriſtian at the Age of Reaſon cannot make upon the Scripture an Act of that Faith, by which we are Chriſtians.* Good Sir ſpare your Rhetorick. This man is a Chriſtian, but in what ſence? He is ſo upon the Title given him by his Birth and Baptiſm; but he is not ſo yet by a Faith that can exert it ſelf in Acts; becauſe one thing which is naturally and abſolutely requiſite in order to reduce Faith into Act, hath hitherto been wanting to him. An Act of Faith does naturally, and of neceſſity ſuppoſe the objects of Faith preſent to the mind. *How ſhall they believe*, ſays St. *Paul*, *in him of whom they have not heard? Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.* This perſon concerned in our preſent Argument, hath not as yet received any information concerning Religion, or the Scripture; he is not therefore in a Condition of making the Act of Faith we ſpeak of. If this information be wanting upon the account of his own careleſneſs, the fault is his; if it be ſo through the default of another, or the incapacity of his Age, he is not to be blamed for it. But by what means ſoever this hath happened, he is not yet arrived at the perfection of being a formal Chriſtian.—And is not this now a pretty odd ſort of *horror*, that M. *de Meaux* has found to complain of, that a Baptiſed perſon, and one who is no further a Chriſtian than his Birth and Baptiſm can entitle him to that name, cannot make an Act of that Faith by which we are Chriſtians, when the objects, without which it is in nature impoſſible to make ſuch an Act, were never yet preſented to his mind? 'Tis, as if I ſhould count it a horrible thing, that a Child, come to be a man, who is endued with reaſon, and the faculty of underſtanding, cannot exert this in an Act of that underſtanding and reaſon by which we are men, at a time when that which is in nature neceſſary to produce ſuch an Act, is wanting to him. Why ſhould a man loſe his time upon ſuch Objections as theſe?

Engliſh Refl. p. 74.

Rom. 10.

This then is manifeſtly to abuſe the Title of Chriſtian given to the man of whom we now ſpeak, and it is but juſt that M. *de Meaux* ſhould correct the abuſe. But it is alſo as juſt, that he ſhould ceaſe from making unreaſonable ſuppoſitions upon the ſame Title. Such a one I call that which he makes in his Sixth Reflection, *That the debate between us*

is concerning all those that have not read the Scripture, of what Age soever they be, and what way soever they may have happened not to have read it. If these men be come to a great Age, and when they had opportunities of readding the Scripture, would not do it, out of a Principle of Irreligion, neglect of their Salvation, or because they had given themselves up to all manner of wickedness, does he think it a reasonable thing to look upon these men as Christians in Covenant, and Mystical Communion with God, meerly because they have been Baptized? This is what I shall never allow him; and, in my opinion, men ought to make their suppositions a little more cautiously and sparingly. Birth and Baptism confer upon a man the Title of Christian; but this is upon condition, and with a Presumption, that when such a one shall come at years of discretion, he shall act agreeably to that great Title, otherwise it will prove no better than an empty name, and only aggravate a man's condemnation.

As for that *Faith infused*, which M. *de Meaux* would have us suppose in this Baptised Christian. It is not any received Doctrine among the *Protestants*, that such Faith is given to all that are admitted Baptism. How many People are there who receive the Sacrament of mens hands, but nothing at all of God's Grace? 'Tis a Question disputed, as a Theological doubt in our Schools, Whether God impart that to any, before they attain to years of Reason? and each man is allowed to follow which part of the Question he thinks most probable. Yet I am content, M. *de Meaux* should suppose it, provided he do not suppose it also of men that are of a riper Age. These two suppositions would clash with one another, there being no probability that God should bestow a Principle of Spiritual Life, such as the Holy Spirit, and Faith infused is, to lye a long time idle within a man, and not produce in him any act of Faith, when the proper Objects thereof were presented to him. A great many Baptised persons may be observed to pass the greatest part of their time in an utter unconcernedness for Religion, in blindness, and heinous sin, and never come to conversion, till the conclusion of their lives. Can we suppose that these men did at their Baptism receive Faith infused, and that they retained it during all the time of their impenitence? This cannot in justice be supposed, and I am mightily mistaken, if M. *de Meaux* find many *Protestants* that will own such a Doctrine. If therefore this Prelate will needs make *Faith infused*, a part of his supposition, he must restrain it to some Children; such I mean, as when they come to years, and the use of Reason, do reduce this Faith into Acts, as the proper Objects of it offer themselves. With this restriction I am very well pleased to let the supposition go, not that I tell him *I acknowledg and own it*, as he makes me say in the Conference, by an excess

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of Freedom, which I never thought of; but meerly, that I may not keep too far off from the main Controverſy, and becauſe I would ſhew my ſelf complaiſant to him.

Theſe are the limitations, and explanations, upon which *M. de Meaux* and I may be brought to an agreement, in the terms of his ſuppoſition. A Baptiſed perſon, a Chriſtian by virtue of his Baptiſm, come to the Age of Reaſon, who may have received the Holy Spirit and Faith infuſed, and who hath not yet read the Holy Scripture. Now our Buſineſs is to know, what judgment from hence can be made of our Principle, which denies that the Church hath an Infallible Authority. *Thence it follows*, ſays M. *de Meaux*, *that a Chriſtian at his firſt going to read the Holy Scripture, ought neither to be inclined of himſelf, or induced by any other to ſay at opening it, I believe, as I believe that God is, that the Scripture I am going to read, is his Word.* M. *de Meaux* fancies whatever he hath a mind; it is not true that this follows from thence. The Scripture muſt be conſidered in Two different reſpects, either in reſpect of the matter of it; that is, of the Truths it contains; or in reſpect of the Form of it; that is, the manner how it contains them, ſo far forth as it is a Book, or a Writing. The method moſt in uſe among Chriſtians, is to begin to teach People the matter of the Scripture, in things which are called Catechiſms, wherein the Creed, the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, and the Doctrine of the Sacraments are explained: Thus before a man advances ſo far, as to reading the Bible, it is plain he hath already made Acts of Divine Faith upon the Principal and moſt Eſſential matters of Religion, and, without any recourſe to the Churches Authority, which may hitherto be utterly unknown to him, is in a condition to ſay, *I believe, as I believe that God is, that the things I am aſſured are contained in this Book, as in the ſource and fountain from whence they are derived, are the Word of God.* Now who makes any Queſtion, but this is a true Act of Faith upon the Scriptures Divine Authority; not with reſpect to its form, as it is Scripture, *i. e.* a Writing; but in regard of its matter, and that which it contains? And this is ſufficient to make a man actually a true Believer, and conſequently to put him into a ſtate of Salvation. Engliſh Refl. p. 74.

M. *de Meaux* will reply, That thus much at leaſt follows from it, That this Chriſtian, cannot make an Act of Divine Faith upon the Scripture, formally conſidered as Scripture; and this was evidently his meaning when he ſaid, *This Propoſition was an horrible thing.* I grant it. But, I ſay withal, that if this Prelate make his pretended *horror* to conſiſt in that; he muſt account what he himſelf hath taught, horrible too. Mr. *Claude*, ſays he, *is not ignorant, that there were in the beginning of Chriſtianity, not only particular men, but alſo whole Nations, which according to the report of* Engliſh Reflect. page 82.

S. Irenæus, *had not the Holy Scripture, and without it, ceased not to be true Christians.* These whole Nations had not the Holy Scripture, they had not read it as yet, The Church had not as yet delivered it to them, they therefore as yet neither had made, nor were in any capacity of making this Act of Faith, *I believe, as I believe that God is, that this Scripture which I am going to read, is his Word.* Notwithstanding all which, according to M. *de Meaux*, these very men ceased not be true Christians. Men may therefore be true Christians without making this Act; and it is no horrible thing at all to suppose there are some Christians, who cannot yet make it, provided they believe the matter contained in Scripture with a Divine Faith. Or, if there be really any horror in the thing, it is Monsieur *de Meaux* himself, who after St. *Irenæus* hath delivered this horrible Proposition to us. If this Prelate shall think to bring himself off by saying, That however, those men by virtue of that Faith they had in the Church, were perfectly disposed, and in a readiness to make that Act of Faith upon the Scripture, as soon as ever the Church should offer it to them; I will say as much of these men we now dispute about; to wit, That by by virtue of that Faith infus'd, which is attributed to them, and of the Acts of Faith already made by them upon the matter of the Scripture, they are likewise in a disposition, and perfect readiness to make that other Act upon the Scripture it self, as soon as they shall be capable of reading it.

English Reflect. Pag. 74.

What Mr. Claude *says concerning the Scripture*, proceeds Mr. *de Meaux*, *the same he must say on the Faith of the Trinity, on that of the Incarnation, on that of Jesus Christ's Mission, and the Redemption of Mankind. For that which forces Mr.* Claude, *and every* Protestant *to say, That the Believer who has not read the Holy Scripture, can believe it only with a humane Faith to be inspired by God, is, That otherwise they must acknowledge an Act of Divine Faith on the Churches sole Authority, which would be to own this Authority as infallible, and Mine the very Foundations of all the new Reformation. But the same Argument returns upon all the Articles of our Faith; and if the Faithful can believe with a Divine Faith, both the Trinity and the Incarnation, and Mission of Jesus Christ on the sole Authority of the Church, and before he has read the Holy Scripture, I shall always conclude with equal Certainty, That the Churches Authority will be infallible. By the Consequence of Mr. Claudes, and all the* Protestants *Principles, we must in reducing the Christians who go to read the Holy Scripture to a bare humane Faith concerning this Scripture, reduce them at the same time to the like, on the most Essential Articles of our belief.*

I must confess I do not very well comprehend the strength of this Prelates argument, and either his Ideas must certainly be not clear, or else mine are most wretchedly confused. A Christian, that has not read the Scripture, cannot believe it to be inspired by God with any more than a human Faith, otherwise there will be a necessity of acknowledging

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ing an Act of Divine Faith, upon the Churches ſole Authority. Therefore this perſon cannot believe the Trinity, the Incarnation, or Miſſion of Jeſus Chriſt with a Divine Faith, before he hath read the Scripture, except he believe them upon the Churches Authority. This is all that I can find in the Argument. But what conſequence is there from one of theſe Two things to the other? If he had ſaid, Therefore he cannot believe theſe Articles with a Divine Faith, before he hath had ſome knowledg of them, and conſidered them, otherwiſe he muſt neceſſarily have believed them upon the Churches Authority; the argument had been good, and I ſhould have been of the ſame opinion with him. But to ſay, Therefore this Chriſtian cannot believe theſe Articles with a Divine Faith, before he hath read the Scripture, except he believe them upon the Churches Authority, is a Propoſition that hath no manner of connexion with that which went before, and depends upon it no otherwiſe, than becauſe it is M. *de Meaux* his pleaſure it ſhould do ſo. The Articles of the Chriſtian Religion, whether we conſider them as written, or not written, are always Divine, their own nature gives them this pre-eminence; and ſo carrying along with them the marks of their being ſuch, make an eaſy impreſſion upon mens Conſciences, provided we ſuppoſe a Conſcience rectified by the Holy Spirit, (as in this diſpute we do all along) or Faith infuſed. Thus, whatever M. *de Meaux* ſays of the matter, before ever a man have read the Scripture, or made any act of Divine Faith upon it formally conſidered, ſo as to acknowledg this Book inſpired by God, he may have made ſeveral ſuch Acts upon the Myſteries of Religion, without any regard to the Churches Authority. 'Tis to no purpoſe for the Prelate to cry out, *That this overthrows the whole Order of Inſtruction; that it is to loſe the the fruit of Baptiſm, and reduce Chriſtians to inſtruct their Baptiſed Children, as if they were not ſo, and that they were yet to deliberate of what Religion they ſhould be.* There is not the leaſt ground for this Diſcourſe, no more than for what he adds afterwards, *That it is to introduce Anabaptiſm.* We Baptize our Children, without expecting their coming into a Condition to make an Act of Divine Faith in their own perſons, becauſe they are Chriſtians from their Birth, by virtue of that Clauſe in God's Covenant, *I will be a God to thee, and to thy Seed after thee*; from whence it follows, that they cannot in juſtice be denied the Sacrament. By this Clauſe, our Children are diſtinguiſhed from ſuch as are born of unbelieving Parents, and do belong to God. But, being all this is with a Condition, that, when they ſhall come to years of diſcretion, they will be Believers, and that their preſent weakneſs makes them uncapable of entring into ſo ſolemn an engagement themſelves, God requires this Condition of their Fathers, who offer them to be Baptiſed; and the Fathers pro-

Engliſh Refl p. 74.

Engliſh Refl p 75.

Gen. 17 7.

miſe thus much for their Children, by virtue of the power Nature gives them to treat in their names, and the right of Education ſhe hath inveſted them with. Upon this account it is, that Infants are Baptized upon a reaſonable hope, that they will one day be Believers, and ratifie, and faithfully perform themſelves the promiſe made in their ſtead by their Fathers. In purſuance of this Firſt engagement, the Fathers apply themſelves to teaching their Children, and at their entrance upon it, upon a ſuppoſal that God will be pleaſed to bleſs their pains, and ſend the Grace of his Holy Spirit along with their words, they endeavour to form, or to excite in their tender minds, the firſt Ideas of a Deity; and imprint there ſentiments of honour, love, and fear of the ſame. Afterwards they explain to them the firſt Elements of Chriſtian Religion, and, as they become capable of it, cauſe them to obſerve its worth and excellence. When this is done, they bring them to publick Congregations of the Church, that there they may receive more full, more particular, and more extenſive inſtruction from the mouth of their Miniſters. At length they ſet them to read the Holy Scripture, ſupplying them with ſuch helps, as are eſteemed neceſſary for their underſtanding. By theſe means, Faith is by little and little formed in their hearts, and they are inſenſibly advanced to this laſt and higheſt Act of Divine Faith, of acknowledging the Scripture to be a Book inſpired by God. What is there now in all this, that overthrows the Order of Inſtruction, or that makes them loſe the fruit of Baptiſm, or reduces Chriſtians to inſtruct their Baptiſed Children, as if they were not ſo, or that favours Anabaptiſm? Baptiſm engages the Fathers to labour diligently in inſtructing their Children, it likewiſe obliges Children to be ready and diſpoſed to learn of their Fathers; they begin this inſtruction with ſuch things as are the moſt needful, and the moſt eaſy to be known; from the inſtruction given at home they proceed to that given by the Miniſters of the Church; and at laſt they paſs to the Scripture it ſelf. And what better method than this can poſſibly be thought on?

Preiug. Leg. A man might find it ſomething difficult to comprehend, which way young people, in whom there may ſtill be obſerved a great deal of weakneſs in the uſe they make of their reaſon, are capable of an Act of Divine Faith, as well in regard of the Myſteries of Religion, as of Scripture. It is an Objection made to us every day. They tell us of *Tradeſmen, of Labourers, of Souldiers, of Women, and of Children, who have all of them a weak judgment ſtill.* They repreſent to us, *That they are overwhelmed with a Thouſand cares, and neceſſary buſineſſes of the World, which do almoſt wholly take them up, and allow them but very little time to employ in examining the Truths that concern Religion.* They tell us, *That the greateſt part of men are deſtitute of ſuch advantages, as are neceſſary to this purpoſe; that one half of*

of the Christian World cannot so much as read; that many of the others understand no more than their Native Language, and that others are of Souls so slender, and such narrow capacities, that they can scarce be brought to a notion of the most easy things. And upon this they would advance the Method of Authority. But besides, that M. *de Meaux* his Principle might be proved liable to the same difficulties, and a man may ask, How it comes to pass, that persons so ignorant as Children are, in whom are met all the infirmities taken notice of in Tradesmen, in poor Labourers, in Soldiers, and in Women, as being no less drawn off by the employments of their Age, nor less to seek for necessary helps and advantages, and whose Soul and capacity is not either larger or more lively, should ever be able to make an Act of Divine Faith, with respect to the Churches Infallible Authority, where so many points must be discust, before we can come to a determination; This Prelate hath taken the trouble to answer both for him and me, so home to the business, that I need only make use of his own words, and beg the favour of him to agree and stand to them. *'Tis not to be imagined,* says he, *that Children, in whom reason begins to appear, because they know not how to rank their Discourses, are incapable of resenting the impressions of Truth. They are seen to learn to speak in an Age yet more inform'd in what manner they learn, by what they make the distinction between the Noun and the Verb, the Substantive and the Adjective, neither themselves know, nor can we who have learnt by this Method well explicate, so deep and hidden it is. We learn almost in the same manner the Churches Language, a secret Light guides us in both these States, in the one 'tis Reason, in the other Faith; Reason discovers it self by little and little, and so does Faith infused by Baptism.* So then there is nothing at all that hinders the method of our instructing Children, and that is not very regular & well contriv'd in it. English. Reflect. page 83.

This was not the method of our forefathers, says M. de *Meaux.* And pray why not? Because, *when they baptized them in their Infancy, they said in that Young Age,* Credo, *I believe, and our Reformers have changed this Form.* M. *de Meaux* might have said something more to the purpose if he had pleased. What signifies this *Credo*, or the change which the Reformed have made in this Form, to the method now in debate? *This form shews us, that when they shall have the use of Reason, they must be immediately taught to make an Act of Faith, and time must not be lost in exciting them to it.* Who questions it? Are they not taught by our method to make this act of Faith at the first? or is any time lost in exciting them to it? As soon as ever they come to any use of their Reason, we propose to them the objects of Faith, we explain them, we endeavour to make them sensible of their Excellency and Divinity, and is not this not only teaching how to make an Act of Faith, but loting no time in teaching them? *They will then be capable of it,* says M. *de Meaux.* They will be capable of it, no doubt English Reflect. p. 75. Ibid. Pag 75.

doubt, as soon as they are taught it; because we suppose the Holy Ghost, and Faith infused in them, and then all that we have left to do, is only to lay the objects plainly before their eyes, and this depends upon the instruction that is given them.

This prepossession is a very strange thing. Does M. *de Meaux* imagine, that the Method of the Churches Infallibility, is, I do not now say, a surer, and more safe, but, I say, a more compendious way for exciting these Acts of Divine Faith in Children, as they come to years of Reason, than that of instructing by the very objects themselves? If that be his opinion, he is under a mistake. I shall not now say, that one of the necessary preparations, is at the very first to perswade this Child these truths in general, That there is one God, That there is one True Religion, and one true Church which professes it; And that this true Religion, and this true Church, are the Church and Religion of Jesus Christ. This is in common to both the Methods. I shall not say, that unless we will make a blind, rash, inconsiderate Act, to be an Act of Divine Faith, this Child must be perswaded of the Churches Infallibility, and perswaded of it by good substantial proofs too, and those, not only deduced from the Testimony of the Church, because that testimony cannot take place yet; but such as do not depend at all upon Scripture too, because the Child is supposed never to have read that. Now, according to Mr. *Arnaud* his own Doctrine, which M. *de Meaux* has given his approbation of, this is a thing utterly impossible. *This Infallibility,* (says he) *is not a thing self-evident, because it depends solely upon the Will of God, which he hath declared to us by the Scriptures.* So that, according to him, we cannot advance this Tenet by proofs that have no dependance upon Scripture.

La perpetuite de la foy. Tom. 2. Ch. 7. Lib. 1. p. 94.

But however, we will suppose that a Man might, and really had discharged this particular of his duty towards the Child, I say still, that another necessary predisposition will be, to teach him where this Infallible Authority of the Church is lodged, and make him capable of hearing and understanding its voice; otherwise it will be impossible to deduce his principle of Divine Faith from it. Now it is acknowledged, that this Infallible Authority is neither in his Parish Priest, nor in his Bishop, nor in the particular Church he lives in, nor in his whole Nation, nor in any thing of all that he can meet with in the common way of Conversation. If you tell him, he will find it in the Pope of *Rome*; all the *Gallican* Church will assure him of the contrary. If you place it in Councils lawfully assembled; Several other Nations, who count themselves as much Catholicks as the *Gallican* Church, will never agree to it. If you tell him, 'tis the consent of the Universal Church in all Ages; Whither shall he go to seek this consent, which is not to be found but by the

the perusal of a Thousand Volumes, the greatest part whereof are either *Greek* or *Latin*? If you say, 'Tis the consent of the Church at this day upon Earth, this will be no such ease neither; because in order to discover what that is, he must consult all the Churches, and know exactly in what points they differ, and in what they agree, which is a business of no small trouble.

Further still, when the several points in which all the parts of the Universal Church are agreed, come to be sufficiently discovered, there is another distinction yet necessary to be made. For M. *de Meaux* acknowledges, that there may be sometimes in the Church *many pernicious Maxims and Practices, which creep in, and get ground by little and little, and become common, but are not passed into Doctrines.* So that there is a necessity of distinguishing betwixt that part of this General Consent which is passed into Doctrine, and that part which is not so, that so he may not mistake those pernicious Maxims and Practices for Articles of the Catholick Faith. Now to omit urging here, that it is a very odd thing, and very hard to believe, that the Universal Church should be Infallible in all such matters as pass into Doctrines, and yet at the same time liable to error, as to certain pernicious Maxims and Practices that become common; This distinction, what method soever be taken in the making it, will cost a great deal of time, and be subject to very great difficulties. For we will suppose, that these *Things thus passed into Doctrines*, are the Characteristical note of the Churches Infallibility, and, as it were, the sphere of her Activity; Must not this Child, unless you will impose upon him, have it made plain to him, what passing into Doctrines means? It is not to be imagined that every Opinion which carries the Pope's, or the Councils Authority, is presently passed into a Doctrine. * *All that is found in the Councils*, says *Arcadius*, *does not make a point of Faith, they are only such things as were defined by the Fathers assembled in Council, and approved by the Pope of* Rome. M. *de Meaux* knows very well, that there are a great many persons in his Communion, and those, persons of no despicable Character neither, who maintain, that the Church of *Rome* hath not yet defined any thing concerning the existence of the Accidents in the Elements of the Eucharist, although this pretended Existence be a point settled in the Council of *Constance*, in as much as the contrary opinion is there reckoned in the Catalogue of *Wickliff* his Articles, condemned by the Council †.

Eng. Reflect. p. 19.

* Nec quicquid habetur in Conciliis, rem facit de fide, sed ea tantùm quæ a Patribus Concilii definiuntur, approbante Romano Pontifice. *Arcad.* de Concord. Sacram. Evang. Lib. 3. Cap. 55. Edit. *Lut. Paris*, 1626.

† There are 45 of *Wickliff's* Articles expressly mentioned, the second whereof is in these words, *Accidentia panis non manent sine subjecto, in eodem Sacramento, i. e. Altaris.* These 45 Articles the Synod, it is there said, had ordered to be carefully examined by many of the Reverend Fathers of the *Roman* Church, Cardinals, Bishops, Abbots, Masters of Divinity

But

Doctors of both Laws, and many other famous persons, and these upon Examination having found some of them to be notoriously heretical, and long since rejected by the holy Fathers, some not Catholick but Erroneous, others scandalous and blasphemous, some offensive to pious Ears, others rash and seditious; They do in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ disallow, and condemn by this perpetual Decree, all and singular these Articles, *&c.* and command his Books to be publickly burnt. *vid. Labb.* Collect. Conc. Tom. 12. *Ad An.* 1415. Edit. *Paris.* 1672. To which, if we add the Council of *Trents* Canon which Anathematizes all who affirm that the substance of Bread and Wine remains, or deny the substance of Christ's Body and Blood to be there, the species only of Bread and Wine remaining, this will be as definitive as can be expected. Conc. Trid. *de Sacram. Cœnæ.* Cap. 4. Can. 2.

But after having found out what *passing into Doctrines* means, which is according to *Arcadius* his definition, having been decided by a Council, and approved by the Pope, are we upon this discovery, got at last to the Infallible Authority we search after, so as to make Acts of Divine Faith thereupon? Not in the least. 'Tis plain matter of Fact, and a Truth that M. *de Meaux* cannot disown, that some Councils approved by the Pope, or, which comes all to the same thing, that some Popes with the approbation of a Council, *Sacro approbante Concilio*, have passed notorious Errors, and such as are of a most dangerous consequence, into points of Doctrine. This is what may be made appear by sundry instances, and, to go no further, by that of the last *Lateran* Council, where the Pope, *Sacro Concilio approbante*, determines, ‖ that the *Bishop of* Rome *alone hath authority over all Councils*, and in which he gave the force of a Law to that Constitution of *Boniface* the eighth, commonly called *The Extravagant*, * *Unam sanctam.* Of which a Man may without any injustice affirm, that it contains the most pernicious, and the most mad, unreasonable

‖ *This Bull may be seen in* Corp. Juris Canon. septem. Decret. Lib. 3. Tit 7. de Concil. cap. 1. *In it the Bull of* Boniface *is reinforced, the pragmatick Sanction abrogated, and the Subjection to the Pope declared to be one of the things necessary to Salvation; The Acts of the Counsil of* Basil *are declared void for this reason particularly.* Cum solum Rom. Pontificem pro tempore existentem, *tanquam Authoritatem supra omnia Concilia habentem,* Conciliorum indicendorum, transferendorum, dissolvendorum plenum jus & potestatem habere, nedum & Sacræ Scripturæ Testimonio, dictis sanctorum Patrum, ac aliorum Roman. Pontificum, sacrorumq; Canonum decretis, sed propriâ eorundem Conciliorum confessione constet manifestè, *and then goes on to give instances.* vid. etiam *Labb.* Coll. Conc. Tom. 14. Conc. *Lateran,* Sess. 11. Bull. Pastor æternus, &c. Edit. *Paris.* 1672.

* *This Decree of* Boniface *may be seen in* Extravagant. Commun. Lib. 1. Tit. 8. de Majoritate & Obedientiâ, *wherein, after having asserted both a Spiritual and Temporal Sword, the one to be used by the Church, the other for it, that is, by Princes at the Pope's command and sufferance, (* In manu Regum & militum, ad nutum & patientiam sacerdotis*) he concludes thus,* Porrò subesse Romano Pontifici omni humanæ Creaturæ declaramus, dicimus, definimus, & pronunciamus omnino esse de necessitate salutis. vid. Corp Jur. Canon. Extravag. ut suprà.

Doctrine,

Doctrine, concerning the Popes Supremacy, in the whole World. This pretended Infallibility then must be sought somewhere else, and more distinctions made still.

It will be replied to this, that if this Infallibility do not lie in all the several points passed into Doctrines, yet it is visible in those however, which all the World are agreed upon, and that never met with any opposition, such as hath been made against that determination of the last *Lateran* Council. But, not to answer here, that this is forming a pleasant sort of Idea for Infallibility, to confine it to these things only which all the World are agreed upon, and so to advance such an Infallibility as oppositions destroy; whereas in the nature of the thing, this ought to bear down all opposition; without objecting further, that this gives occasion to a great many other questions not less necessary to be resolved, than they are nice; as for instance, to know exactly how considerable these oppositions must be, to render them effectual against Infallibility; and whether it be sufficient to this purpose, that a particular Church singly, or one whole Nation oppose it, and no more; to know, whether, when one party who think themselves the stronger shall have condemned this opposition, that restores Infallibility, and make it on their side; to know, whether, when the party which carries it in number, but are much the weaker in judgment and reason, shall crush that opposition by main force, and in a very violent and boisterous manner, they are then become more infallible than they were before the opposers were quelled: Not to insist upon all this, I say, which yet is very well worth a Man's while to canvass, Ought it not at least be well known, whether the general consent that is pretended, be really and truly such, or whether it might not rather be, either fear, or compliance, or coldness in Religion, ignorance, or idleness, and cowardice, and such other worldly and carnal principles, that might have hindred the opposition from being more publick? For if it were so, How can that ever be looked upon as a General Consent? Or what probability is there, that Infallibility should have a good title conveyed by such ill means? Ought not a Man to be well assured, that there will start up no new opposition hereafter? For in matters of Doctrine, Custom and Prescription are no good arguments against the Truth, so that a part of the Church shall at any time have full and just power to declare themselves in opposition, whenever they shall think fit; and consequently put a stop to the progress of Infallibility.

Lastly, When all these difficulties are removed, the way made smooth and easy, the Child, or the Man that is to be taught, by substantial fair Arguments brought into a fit condition to hear the Infallible voice of the Church,

and to believe whatever ſhe ſhall teach him with a Divine Faith; I would gladly be informed, who it is that ſhall convey this voice to him: Shall it not be his Pariſh Prieſt, or his Prieſt's Deputy, or ſome Miſſionary, whoſe buſineſs it is to Catechiſe and inſtruct the ignorant; or however his Biſhop; that is, in ſhort, Chuſe what courſe you pleaſe, ſhall they not be men that are ſubject to miſtakes, and who it is poſſible may take upon them to teach their own private fantaſies, and call them the Faith of the Catholick Church? Pray reſolve me, whether one ought entirely to depend upon theſe, and whether without any further information than their bare Teſtimony, he might with a ſafe Conſcience ſay to them, *I believe, as I believe that God is, that what you tell me is the infallible Doctrine of the Church, to whoſe Authority men ought to ſubmit; and as ſuch, without any further aſſurance of its being ſuch, than your declaring that it is ſo, I believe it with a Divine Faith.* I take M. *de Meaux* to be a perſon of ſo great Equity and Integrity, that he will acknowledg this cannot be done; and that inſtead of making an Act of Divine Faith this way, a Man would quite contrary, not only bring himſelf to a mere humane Faith, but, beſides, would expoſe his Conſcience as a prey to Error and Impoſture. It is neceſſary therefore for the avoiding this inconvenience, to lead this Child directly to the Churches Infallible Authority, that ſo he may hear her voice immediately from her ſelf, without any Pipe of Conveyance, without Miniſter, and without Interpreter. For ſo long as there continues a fallible medium between him and it, it is evident, he can never be perfectly aſſured, that it is that Infallible Authority which his Conſcience ought to rely upon, and confide in; nor can he conſequently ever believe with a Divine Faith; becauſe in order to that, it is not enough that he be ſhewed the Catholick Church, but he muſt moreover be ſhewed particularly in what part ſhe is infallible, and be brought thither in ſuch a manner, as that he may apply himſelf to her immediately. Now if it be not granted, that this is abſolutely impoſſible, it muſt at leaſt be confeſt, that this renders the Child's progreſs horribly tedious, and cuts him out ſo much work as will take up the beſt part of his life; becauſe to compaſs this, he muſt find out the Univerſal Conſent of the Catholick Church, in ſuch matters as are paſſed into Doctrines, and againſt which there never was, nor ever will be any oppoſition, and that, becauſe men acquieſce in them upon a principle voluntarily and ſincerely: And therefore to imagine, that this method of inſtruction by the Churches Authority, is ſhorter and more compendious than that of inſtructing by the objects themſelves, is but feeding a Mans ſelf with wild fancies; and M. *de Meaux* could not poſſibly have hit upon any thing more contrary to his own principle, than

what

what he hath said, That *Children must be immediately taught to make an Act of Faith, and time must not be lost in exciting them to it*; for it is an infinite loss of time, to carry them about by the Churches Authority. Eng. Reflect. p. 75.

But the thing that most surprises me in this Prelate's arguing, is, that he hath managed his business so ill, as to the Consequence, which he pretends to infer from the *Protestants* Principle, that they of necessity must either have no great matter in it, or if it be so horrible a thing as this Prelate would perswade us, it rebounds back with all its *horror*, upon him and his Religion, as well as upon us. To give as clear a demonstration of this, as if it were a proposition in the Mathematicks, all we need do, is to put the same supposition against him, which he hath done against us. Let us imagine then a *baptised person*, whom both Monsieur *de Meaux* and we acknowledg to be a *Christian*, one that, * according to what was defined in the Council of *Vienna* under *Clement* the fifth, hath received the Holy Ghost, and *Faith infused*, or habitual, and who is now come to *years of discretion*. As there is a certain time, when he hath not as yet read the Holy Scripture, so is there likewise a time, when he hath never been taught that there is an infallible Catholick Church: For if we must needs confess that he hath not read the Holy Scripture ever since the time he was born, there is the same necessity, that he had not ever from the very time he was born, any knowledg of this Infallible Church. The knowledg of both these things had some time antecedent to it, in which neither of them was known, and this time must be an Age ripe for the use of Reason, because, if Reason be required in order to reading the Holy Scripture, and being perswaded that it comes from God, it is every whit as requisite, in order to acknowledging the Catholick Church, and being perswaded of her Infallibility. As therefore, there will according to our principle be a point of Time, in which a Baptized Christian, who is come to the use of his Reason, and hath Faith infused, cannot make this Act of Divine Faith, *I believe, as I believe that God is, that the Scripture is his word*, because he will not as yet have read it: In like manner will there be such a time, wherein this Baptized Christian, at years of discretion, and endowed with an infused Faith, cannot make this Act of Divine Faith, *I believe, as I believe that God is, that the Catholick Church is infallible*, because this is what he will not yet have learnt any thing of. If M. *de Meaux* affirm with such confidence, that this

* *The words of the definition, so far as they concern this matter, are these*, Aliis asserentibus, quòd in baptismo, & virtutes, & gratia informans infunduntur quoad habitum, etsi non pro illo tempore quoad usum; Nos opinionem, quæ dicit tam parvulis quam adultis conferri in baptismo informantem gratiam, & virtutes, tanquam probabiliorem —— Sacro approbante Concilio duximus eligendam. *Clement.* Lib. 1. Tit. 1. de sum. Trin. & fide Catholic.

former is a horrible propoſition; *That a Baptized Chriſtian, at the Age of Reaſon, cannot make upon the Scripture an Act of that Faith, by which we are Chriſtians*, he muſt as ſtifly affirm the ſecond to be no leſs horrible, That a Baptiſed Chriſtian, at the Age of Reaſon, cannot upon the Infallibility of the Church, make an Act of that Faith, by which we are Catholicks. If he be of opinion, that the Condition in which this Baptized Chriſtian at the Age of Reaſon is, with relation to the Scripture, is a condition of *Doubting* whether the Scripture be inſpired by God or no; becauſe *to doubt, is, not to know whether a thing be or not*; he muſt alſo be of opinion, that the condition which this Baptized Chriſtian at the Age of Reaſon is in, with regard to the Churches Infallibility, is every whit as much a condition of doubting, whether the Church be Infallibe or not, and that upon the very ſame reaſon, becauſe, not to know whether a thing be, or not, is to doubt of it. Moreover, if he pretend, that, according to our hypotheſis, it is not poſſible to make any act of Divine Faith upon the myſteries of our Religion, ſuch for inſtance, as the Trinity, the Incarnation, and Miſſion of Jeſus Chriſt, nor the Redemption of mankind, before he have read the Scripture, for fear of acknowledging a principle of Divine Faith beſides the Scripture; he muſt confeſs withal, that, according to his hypotheſis, it is not poſſible for him to make any Act of Divine Faith upon the ſame myſteries, before he have learnt that the Church hath an Infallible Authority, for fear of acknowledging another principle of Divine Faith, beſides the Churches Authority. In one word, the caſe is ſo exactly the ſame in both, that this Prelate cannot find any difference between them, which will not make for our advantage: So that he will of neceſſity be driven, either to retract this violent and paſſionate ſaying, *That there is a point (of time) in which, according to our Doctrine, a Chriſtian is obliged to doubt, whether the Scripture be inſpired by God, whether the Goſpel be a Truth or a Fable; whether Jeſus Chriſt be a Deceiver, or a Teacher of the Truth*: Or elſe, if he be ſo reſolute, that he will not clear us of this charge, he muſt bring the ſame accuſation upon himſelf, and lay it at his own door, which will be done by adding only this clauſe, That this Chriſtian is as much obliged to doubt whether the Catholick Church be Infallible. We can maintain againſt him, that there is no evaſion, no middle courſe betwixt theſe two.

This is almoſt the very ſame that I offered to him in the Conference, and to which I had no anſwer returned, which was a ſufficient indication, that no good one could be returned to it. But however, let us ſee what he hath written upon this ſubject in his fourth Reflection. *As we*, ſays he, *ſhew Mr.* Claude *a point of time, which, even at the uſe of Reaſon, neceſſarily precedes the reading of the Scripture, he muſt alſo be able to ſhew us one, that*

English Refl. p. 76.

that precedes the Churches Inſtructions; but this he will never find. No? Will he never find this? What a ſad caſe that is? Before the Churches inſtructions can be received, ſo as to believe with a Divine Faith what ſhe tells us, (for of theſe inſtructions it is, that we diſpute at preſent) we muſt firſt know, what is the meaning of theſe Two words, *The Church*, and *Infallible*; we muſt likewiſe know further, that there is one Catholick Church in the World; after that we muſt know, that this Catholick Church is infallible; and laſtly, we muſt alſo know, where this Catholick Church is to be found. Now a man cannot, without making himſelf a laughing-ſtock to the whole World, imagine that all theſe Ideas are natural to a Child, or born with him; much leſs ſtill, that they are infuſed into him ſome ſupernatural way, nor diſown, that they are all acquired; that is, that they came upon this Child ſince the time of his Birth, and his Baptiſm, by the uſe he makes of his reaſon, and the converſation he hath had among Chriſtians. Suppoſe a young Infant were preſently after he is Baptiſed, carried off into ſome Wilderneſs, there to live among wild Beaſts; or that he were ſent away into the further extream parts of *Tartary*, to be educated there among Heathens; it is ſure, that without a Miracle he could never have any of theſe Ideas of a Catholick Church, and an infallible Church; it is alſo certain, he could not have any of thoſe Myſteries that are conveyed to us by revelation, for the Ideas that depend upon revelation, in the ordinary way, are communicated only by the Word. *Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.* Now from hence it manifeſtly follows, that there is a point, in which, even at the uſe of Reaſon, a Child hath not as yet theſe Ideas, and conſequently a point of Time, which precedes the inſtructions of the Church. So that if the Buſineſs ſtick only at the finding out ſuch a point of time, M. *de Meaux* muſt without any more ado acknowledg, that the ſame Argument may be objected againſt him with regard to the Church, that he objects to us with regard to Scripture. A man muſt firſt have been inſtructed, that there is a Church, and that this Church is infallible, before he can poſſibly receive the Doctrines of the Church, ſo as to believe them with a Divine Faith; and this very inſtruction, ſuppoſing the uſe of Reaſon ſtrong enough to receive it, does alſo as neceſſarily ſuppoſe a certain portion of time, even at the uſe of Reaſon, in which this Child had not the leaſt knowledg of theſe things.

To ask now, proceeds M. *de Meaux*, *by what Motives God makes us ſenſible of his Churches Authority, is to depart viſibly from the Queſtion.* And pray why is this to depart from the Queſtion? If there be ſuch Motives, as works in this Child a perſwaſion of the Churches Authority, theſe muſt of neceſſity be preſented by the means of Inſtruction, he can never at-

attain to them any other way. They must also be presented to him, after that he is come to make some use of his reason, for he is not capable of them just at the very first moments that his reason shews it self. Now who is so blind, as not to perceive, that this very thing does clearly determine the Question, whether there be any point of time, in which a Child hath not as yet any knowledg at all of these Motives, seeing the necessary consequence of this is, that even at the use of Reason, this time, or this point may be particularly noted? If I may not be believed, yet at least believe M. *de Meaux* himself, who lays down this for one of the Motives, *That of all Societies, this is the sole, to whom none can shew her beginning, nor any interruption of her visible and exterior state by any averr'd fact.* I do not now take upon me to argue, whether this Proposition be true or false; or, whether looking upon it as a Motive, it be concludive or not; this is not a proper place for that. What I say, is only this, That supposing all M. *de Meaux* hath said here, you do likewise suppose, that the Children must before have made some use of his reason, in order to be wrought upon by it; and consequently, that even at the use of reason, there may a certain point of time be noted, in which the Child had not any knowledg at all of this matter. So that this particular is now granted on all hands; and persons of sound sense, and sound faith too, will be of opinion, that I have demonstrated, the force of both our Arguments to be alike, even by M. *de Meaux* his own confession. There needs therefore no further disputing of the case, there is a point of time, at the use of reason, antecedent, not only to all the Churches instructions, but moreover to all instructions concerning the Church; as well as there is such a point of time, at the use of reason, which precedes the reading of the Scripture. Whether, in the method of all the Informations we receive, those concerning the Church be the first in order, is a distinct Question, and what way soever it be determined, will not hinder, there being such a point of time in which a baptised Christian cannot say, *I believe, as I believe, that God is, that this Catholick Church, which I am going to hear, hath an infallible Authority*; and this is the very thing I undertook to prove.

But to carry the matter on still farther, and let men see by this particular instance, how dangerous a thing it is to be engaged in the defence of false Propositions, I do maintain, not only, that it is not true, that there is not a point of time before the Churches instructions, wherein this Child hath not the least knowledg of the infallibility we are now discoursing of; but besides, that it is not true, that the first instructions are those of this infallible Church; my meaning is, that it is not this infallible Church which gives him the first informations, and prevails with him

him by her Authority to believe them with a Divine Faith. To evince this, I had said in the Conference, that in our Creed, that Article which concerns the Church, is placed after the Articles of Doctrine, and that the beginning of it is thus, *I believe in God Almighty*, and so on. After which we come at length to the Catholick Church; whereas on the contrary, if the Churches infallible Authority were laid as the ground and foundation of all the rest, the Creed ought to begin in another manner, and men should say, *I believe the Church, and by the Catholick Church I believe in God the Father. He considers not*, says M *de Meaux, that 'tis the Church her self which teaches us the whole Creed; that 'tis on her word we say, I believe in God the Father, and in Jesus Christ his only Son, and so on; which we cannot say with a firm Faith, unless God at the same time puts in our hearts, that the Church which teaches us, deceives us not.* English Reflect. Pag. 77.

M. *de Meaux* himself does not consider, that the infallible voice of the Church, if there were such a one, must be either in the Pope, or in the Council, or in the Pope and Council together, or in the Universal consent of the Church in all Ages, or in that of all Christians now alive, with respect to things that are passed into Doctrines: and that, which way soever of all these it be considered, 'tis absurd to affirm, that this infallible voice of the Church, is it which gives the Child his first instructions. If we will speak Reason and Truth, we must say, That our Fathers, our Mothers, our Nurses, our first Tutors, or at best our ordinary Pastors, are the persons that convey to us these first instructions, and that it is not by any means the Catholick Church, speaking by any Mouth of hers which pretends to infallibility.

But says, M. *de Meaux, When Children hear their Parents, they hear the Church, for our Parents are our Teachers, only as they are Children of the Church; 'tis for this reason the Holy Ghost sends us to them, Ask thy Father, and he will shew thee; thy Elders, and they will tell thee.* When Children hear their Parents, they hear the Church, what is this to the purpose? Do they hear the infallible Voice of the Church, so as to be able to form thereupon an Act of Divine Faith; and to say, *I believe, as I believe that God is, that what my Parents tell me is this, The infallible Voice of the Church, and as such I receive it as the Voice of God himself?* If M. *de Meaux* do not mean as much as this comes to, he plays and trifles with his disputation. Children hear the Church, when they hear their Parents, but nevertheless they may not believe what they say with a Divine Faith, they believe t with a humane Faith only. Is not this plainly to desert the cause, and acknowledg the very thing we are now affirming? But if his meaning be, that they do then hear the infallible Voice of the Church, so as from thence to be able to form an Act of Divine Faith upon it, he is necessita- Pag. 83.

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ted at the same time, to own the Fathers, the Mothers, the Nurses, the Tutors, the Parish Priests, the Vicars, the Catechists, and in general all the first Instructors of Children, for infallible persons. He must assert, that when the Church makes them her Children, and, as such, our first Teachers, she does at the same time invest them with her Infallibility; for, if it be not so, what probable pretence can there be for making Acts of Divine Faith upon the first instructions they give us? I am very well satisfied, that they should be the dispensers of the Churches Doctrine, and agree that they instruct us as such; but the main point is, Whether they be Infallible dispensers, or not? If they be, then here is Infallibility displayed, and diffused far and wide in the Catholick Church, by the particular favour of M. *de Meaux*. Here it is distributed very cheap and plentiful, this Prelates Nurse will be as much infallible, as the Prelate himself; his Lordships Bailiff as much so as the Pope of *Rome* himself; and the honest little Vicar of *Vaugirard*, as much so, as the first Council of *Nice*. A mighty blessing this! But if these People be not infallible, then their word is no longer the infallible Voice of the Church, nor their instruction any more the instruction of the Churches infallible Authority. Then we cannot any more form upon that instruction an Act of Divine Faith, which is the very business in controvesy between us, the Infallible instructions of the Church are not any more the first instructions we receive, and all M. *de Meaux* his Dispute vanishes away into Air and Smoak. There will be then a certain time, when a baptized Christian, at the Age of Reason, and having Faith infused, will not be able to say, *I believe, as I believe that God is, that the Catholick Church is infallible*; there will also be another time, in which he cannot say, *I believe by the Churches infallible Authority, as I believe that God is, that the Holy Scripture is inspired by God; I believe, by the same Authority, that the Gospel is no Fable, but a Divine Truth; I likewise believe, by the same Authority, that Jesus Christ is not an Impostor, as Infidels think of him, but the Teacher of the Truth.*

There will likewise be another point of time, in which M. *de Meaux* will be forced to acknowledg a bare humane Faith in this Child, for which he hath signified such a mighty aversion. I desire he would please to tell us what Faith he calls that, by which the Child believes the Catholick Curch is Infallible, merely upon the testimony of his Father, or his Parish Priest, and without examining the grounds and reasons for it himself; or that, by which he believes the Scripture to be of Divine inspiration, upon the bare word of his Father, or Parish Priest, who tell him, that this is the opinion of the Catholick Church, without enquiring at all, whether this be in truth the Catholick Churches opinion or not. For if he says these are Acts of Divine Faith, he must necessarily

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ſuppoſe at the ſame time, that the Father, and the Pariſh Prieſt are infallible witneſſes, and if he will not allow them to be infallible, he muſt own a humane Faith. And here I cannot but take notice how much M. *de Meaux* abuſes this term Human Faith, for the whole Air of his diſcourſe ſeems all along to inſinuate, that it is not only abſurd, but really impious, to ſay, that the Scripture may be believed with a human Faith, and the plainer ſort of people may very eaſily miſunderſtand it. It is expedient to ſhew clearly what the meaning of this is. Faith then may be termed humane, either with regard to the object of it, or with regard to the original of it, that is, the efficient cauſe that produces it in us; or with regard to the moral cauſe of it, that is, the Argument, or Motive, which moves us to believe the thing. It is humane as to its object, when the matter it is concerned about is only a thing belonging to men, as the Exploits, ſuppoſe, that are related to us in Hiſtory; the Victories, for inſtance, obtained by *Cæſar*, or the mighty Conqueſts of *Alexander*. It is humane as to it's Original, or Principle, when the Apprehenſion which forms it in us, is purely natural and humane, and ſuch is that Apprehenſion by which I believe, that there is in the World ſuch a City as is called *Conſtantinople*, or that the Acts reported to be done by *Cæſar* and *Alexander*, are true. It is humane, laſtly, as to its moral Cauſe, when the Argument or motive that prevails with me to believe it, is a teſtimony merely humane, and ſuch as carries nothing of Divine Authority with it; and thus I believe the Conqueſts of *Cæſar* and *Alexander*, upon the teſtimony of the Hiſtorians which give a relation of them. When the Scripture therefore is ſaid to be believed by a humane Faith, it muſt not be ſuppoſed, that we take this Faith to be humane in regard of its object. 'Tis a truth perfectly agreed upon among all profeſſors of Chriſtianity, and which M. *de Meaux* and I never conteſt about, that the Scripture is a ſupernatural, Divine thing. Nor muſt it be ſuppoſed, that we call this Faith humane with reſpect to its principle, or efficient Cauſe, for I cannot in the leaſt doubt, but that the very firſt ſentiments, of the Child in favour and reſpect to the Scripture, and that teachable frame of mind by which he believes it to be Divine, upon the Teſtimony of his Father, or Paſtor, do proceed from the Operation of the Holy Ghoſt, which only produces in us not only Faith it ſelf, but even the very inclinations and diſpoſitions to that Faith. This Faith then is called humane, ſolely with regard to the Argument or Motive which moves the Child to believe; for this Argument not being as yet any Infallible or Divine Authority, but only the Teſtimony of his Father, or Spiritual Paſtor, can be no more than a humane Argument. This may be illuſtrated by the Example of the Inhabi-

tants of *Sichar*, who at first believed Jesus Christ to be the *Messias*, upon the bare word of the *Samaritan* Woman; but afterwards believed upon the conviction they themselves had received, by seeing and hearing him
Joh. 4. 42. speak. For, *they said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard him our selves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the World.* If you pass a judgment upon the first act of these mens Faith, with regard to its object, you must have a great care how you say it is a humane Faith. The *Messias* is a Divine Object. So likewise if you judge of it with respect to its efficient cause, you must not call it humane, for this was one of the first operations of Grace. But if you judge of it with relation to the Argument it was grounded upon, then you must term it a humane Faith, because this Argument was nothing else, but the bare testimony of that *Samari-*
Ver. 39. *tan* Woman. *They believed in him,* says the Evangelist, *for the saying of the Woman.* It is easie to apply this to our present case.

Thus you see we are upon the level with M. *de Meaux*, as to our Consequence; and it lies now upon him to inform us, if there be any priviledge that can give just occasion, why His consquence deduced from our Principle should be full of horror, and deserve to be represented in such terms, as were, of any that could possibly have been made use of, the most likely to strike a dread into *Madamoiselle de Duras*; but yet ours deduced from his Doctrine, should become gentle, agreeable enough, and fit to be treated with all the tenderness, and in the most honourable manner in the World. It will be now his business to shew us, whether, when we and our Religion are the subjects of the debate, a Man ought to say, that the condition we suppose the Baptized Christian to be in, is an obligation upon him to doubt, whether the Scripture be inspired by God, whether the Gospel be a Truth, or a Fable; whether Jesus Christ be a Deceiver, or a Teacher of the Truth: But when we discourse of him, and his hypothesis, we should do it in another sort of language, and immediately put quite another face and expression upon the thing. For my own part, I who am no such Master of Complement and Address, am very well content to defend M. *de Meaux* against himself, but then would defend my self too; I am willing to shelter his own Principle from the heat of his passion, but I desire too to partake my self of the benefit I shall do him. I say then in vindication both of him and my self, that what he calls *Doubting*, is not in strict and proper speaking any such thing. For, as I observed before, to doubt of the Truth, or Nature of any thing, implies not only, that a Man hath a knowledg, and hath already formed an Idea of it within himself; but more than that, that he hath made some enquiry into the question in dispute,

diſpute, that he hath ſtudied it with ſome application and attention, and hath taken a view of very near all the Reaſons that can be alledged on either ſide; but upon finding thoſe Reaſons of almoſt equal weight, the mind could not tell how to determine it ſelf. In one word, Doubting ſignifies an Act of the Judgment already made, but of a wavering judgment, which could not ſettle it ſelf on either ſide. This is what men call *Doubting*, when they deſign to ſpeak properly and exactly. Whence I infer, that when a Man hath not as yet made any act of judgment upon a thing, as both of us ſuppoſe the Baptized perſon hath not, neither upon the Scripture, as having not read it yet, nor upon the Churches Authority, as having not ſearcht into the grounds of it yet, this Man may properly be ſaid to be ignorant of the thing, to have no knowledg or notion at all of it; but he cannot by any means be ſaid to doubt of it.

Thus much in my opinion may ſuffice to put the Readers in a capacity of judging of M. *de Meaux*'s pretended conſequence, and diſcerning whether he had any great reaſon to triumph and inſult ſo upon it. But how ill ſoever I think of the cauſe, the Prelate that vindicates it, is a perſon, for whom I do ſtill, and ever ſhall retain, all the honour and reſpect that his own deſerts require. An Argument, and the propounder of that Argument, are two very different things; and in contending againſt the one, I do not forego the honour due to the other. Upon this account it is, that I cannot paſs over M. *de Meaux*'s ſeventh Reflection, without ſome little notice; the buſineſs and deſign of which is, to aggravate this paſſage in my Relation. *Here M.* de Condom's *mind was ſeen not to be in its uſual ſtate, and the liberty which is ſo natural to him, ſenſibly decreaſed.* This ſeems to me an Intimation, that the Biſhop was not well ſatisfied with theſe words, which obliges me to make this declaration to him now, That I ſpoke purely with regard to that which was the ſubject of our diſpute, without the leaſt reflection upon his perſonal abilities. When I ſhall have any occaſion to mention the ſtrength of his Wit, his Judgment, and Apprehenſion, I will never be unjuſt to him upon that point, nor retract whatever I have already written concerning them. But I hope for all that, when the advantages of the Cauſe I aſſert, are to be diſcours'd of, he will allow I ſhould endeavour to make them appear in the beſt manner my weakneſs is capable of doing it. I know very well, that, to excellent natural parts, he hath made a large addition of acquired knowledg; but notwithſtanding all that, I muſt be of opinion, that it is one of the moſt impoſſible things in the World to maintain his Argument. Theſe two Truths are not in the leaſt deſtructive, or prejudicial to one another.

Meaux's Engliſh Reflect. page 87.

All that needs now to be done, for the bringing this buſineſs to a Concluſion, is only to ſay one word concerning M. *de Meaux* his Argument, and the Principle he aſſerts, with relation to Heretical and Schiſmatical Communions. I offered in the Conference, that this Prelate's Maxims would ſerve every jot as well to continue a Jew in his Judaiſm, a Pagan in his Paganiſm, a Heretick in his Hereſy, and a Schiſmatick in his Schiſm, as an Orthodox Chriſtian in the true Church. The Reaſon I urged for it, was, that ſuppoſing this to be the firſt Article a Child was to be inſtructed in, *That he muſt ſubmit to the Churches Infallible Authority, and receive the Scripture, and all other points of Religion at her hands*, the Child muſt needs apply his Idea of the Church, to that particular Society in which he lived; ſo that it muſt needs be to that that he would ſubmit; from that he would receive the Scripture as of Divine Authority; and from her, in ſhort, he would take the meaning and interpretation of that Scripture. Thus if M. *de Meaux* his Principle held good, there could be no expedient found out for reclaiming a Heretick, or a Schiſmatick, from that particular Communion, into which, by being born and brought up in it, he had the unhappineſs to be incorporated. To this purpoſe, I inſtanced in an *Æthiopian* Child, and they that pleaſe may take a ſecond view of this paſſage in the Conference, where they will perceive how M. *de Meaux* cleared his hands of that Argument. We muſt examine at preſent, what freſh objections he hath brought againſt it in his Fifth Reflection.

English Reflect. Pag. 78. *They*, ſays he, *ſometimes when men cannot free themſelves, think to get off, by endeavouring to caſt others into the like perplexity as theirs.* To what purpoſe ſerves this haranguing upon a common place which I might very juſtly retort, by ſaying, Thus ſometimes, when men endeavour to perplex others, they perplex themſelves? I appeal to the Reader's Judgment, whether I were perplexed with M. *de Meaux* his Argument, and whether what I offered to him, concerning Heretical and Schiſmatical Communions, be any evaſion or retiring to ſave my ſelf.

Ibid. *He will gain nothing* (adds he) *by this addreſs; for, in fine, what cauſe does he pretend to combat for? Is it for indifferency of Religions? Will he ſay with the wicked, that there is not a true Church, in which men indeed act by Divine Motions? And under pretence that the Devils, or if he pleaſes, Nature can imitate, or, to ſay better, counterfeit thoſe Motions, Will he maintain that they are every where imaginary?*

What occaſion have I given M. *de Meaux* to accuſe me of contending for indifference of Religion? I pretend to make it appear, that his Principle tends directly to maintain every man in the Religion he was born in; Muſt this be called contending for indifference of Religions? If

If there be any thing in the diſpute between us, that ſeems to favour ſuch an indifference, his Principle muſt be taxed with it, and not I, who only take notice of the Conſequences of his Principle, with a deſign to ſhew how ill a one it is. Will not this Prelate, who knows ſo very well when he hath a mind to it, how to argue upon the *Proteſtants* Principles, diſtinguiſh at all, between what a Man ſpeaks as from himſelf, and the conſequences that are inferred from the Maxims of an Antagoniſt? If I had ſaid, as from my ſelf, any thing that tended to indifference in Religions, he might have been ſmart upon me; but what pretence can he have to upbraid me at this rate, when I ſay that his Principle will ſerve as well to juſtify an Infidel, a Heretick, or a Schiſmatick, in the ſeveral Communions they were born in, as to keep an Orthodox Chriſtian firm to his Church? M. *de Meaux* hath taken ſeveral other occaſions beſides this, to equivocate after this manner. In our Conference he was pleaſed to call what I ſaid, to ſhew that his hypotheſis made for the *Jews* Cauſe, a *Jewiſh Argument*; and you have ſeen in his ſecond Reflection, how he charged me with an opinion, That men ought to examine after Jeſus Chriſt; becauſe, as he would needs have it, I had diſcovered ſo much in an Argument that I had made upon his Principle.

It ſhall never be I, nor any of the like Judgment with me, that ſhall go about to introduce Scepticiſm in Religion, and M. *de Meaux* will not find that any of us hath written ſuch things as may be read in the Author of the Prejudices. *If it be true, that the darkneſs of our underſtandings, and our prejudices, may hinder us from diſcerning in the Scripture, and in the Fathers, ſuch truths as are manifeſtly contained in them; and if even men of the moſt enlightned underſtandings, ſuch as Mr.* Claude, *can offer evident falſities for the moſt certain and infallible proofs; who ſhall ſecure us, that we are not of the number of thoſe that are deceived, and who have not made a good choice in the buſineſs of Religion, and that our being perſwaded we have choſen well, is not an effect of our prejudices, and our paſſions, and of ſome ſecret fondneſs of our own opinions?* We know very well, not only that there are Divine Motions in the true Church, but likewiſe that there are plain ſenſible marks to diſtinguiſh them from thoſe counterfeit motions which proceed from the Devil, or from Nature; and we ſhall always be very far from approving what the ſame Author of the Prejudices hath delivered; *That this aſſurance, this confidence, this freedom from ſcruples and fears, this inward reſt and tranquility which is founded upon mens believing themſelves to be in the good way, and to walk in the light, is a token ſo full of equivocation and deceit, that it ten thouſand times oftner goes along with Error, and the way to Hell, than with Truth, and the way to Salvation.*

Prejug. Legitim. Pag. 10.

Pag. 44.

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This Doctrine seems to us of such a pernicious nature, that we shall never scruple to declare our selves openly against it, and against every thing else which might have any tendency to indifference of Religions; only M. *de Meaux* would do well to let us know, which way such a declaration can be of any advantage to him, with relation to what I offered concerning the Heretical Communions; for this is what I have not been hitherto able to comprehend. I am of opinion, that the belief they continue in, of their own Communion's being the true Church, does not proceed from God, but from the Devil, or from Nature. I think too, that it is a mortal Error which leads them into perdition; But what is all this to our present purpose? We talk of reclaiming them from that Error; and I affirm, that if to their erroneous belief you proceed to add M. *de Meaux* his principle, the substance whereof is, That men must submit to the Church blindly, and implicitely; that they must receive the Scripture at her hand, believe it to be Divine upon her word, understand and interpret it only in her sense, believe what she shall tell you, merely because she says it, and without examining it at all, and hearken to nothing that shall contradict this; that there will be no way at all left to bring them off from this dangerous precipice.

Eng. Reflect. p. 79. *And well*, says M. *de Meaux*, *if it be so, it remains only to chuse between all these different Churches, which attribute to themselves this Authority; But when the Calvinist Church is gone at the very first brush, she degrades her self from the Title of the Church; since she finds not in her self Authority enough to cause all those whom she begins to instruct, to make an Act of a Christian, and an Act of Divine Faith.*

Although the *Calvinistical* Church, since M. *de Meaux* is pleased to call it by that name, do not rank her self among those who pretend to an absolute dominion over Consciences, yet there is no fear, either of her falling, or degrading her self upon this account. On the contrary, it is such kind of bold pretensions as these, and so highly injurious to Almighty God, that occasion the fall of the Societies, which fill their own heads with these fancies. These Societies degrade themselves, by labouring too much to exalt themselves, *Tolluntur in altum, Ut lapsu graviore ruant.*

The Church of *Rome* may dispute as much as she pleases with the *Greek* and *Æthiopick* Churches, concerning her imaginary Titles and Authority, This is a prize we are not at all greedy of, nor shall never be very earnest in contending for. We will still stand in all humility at the foot of the Throne of God, without ever offering to usurp the seat, and hope, that humility of ours will be a great deal more acceptable and pleasing to God, than the boldness of other men. *Deposuit potentes de*

de ſedibus, & exaltavit humiles, He hath put down the mighty from their ſeat, and hath exalted the humble and meek. Luk. 1. 52.

But yet we may for all this, be allowed to look on, and ſee how the buſineſs is managed between the *Latins*, *Greeks*, and *Æthiopians*, and enquire what meaſures we ought to take in chuſing between theſe ſeveral Churches. *The true Church*, ſays M. *de Meaux*, *hath her particular Characters, that diſtinguiſh her from others; ſhe hath, without going any further, or ſearching any deeper, her ſucceſſion, in which none can ſhew her by any poſitive fact, any interruption, innovation, or change. This is what no falſe Church can ſo clearly glory of as the true, becauſe by glorying of it ſhe would viſibly condemn her ſelf; there will be then always in the Inſtruction which the true Church ſhall give her Children concerning her Condition, ſomething that no other Sect can, or dare ſay. 'Tis by this we would convince, if it were in queſtion, the* Greeks, *the* Ethiopians, *the* Armenians, *and other Sects, which ſeem in this reſpect more deceiving, becauſe of the appearance of Succeſſion that they ſhew; which alſo makes them way to attribute to themſelves with a little more ground, the Authority of the Church. But as for the* Calvinian *Church, there is an end of her, becauſe ſhe hath not ſo much as an apparent and tolerable ſucceſſion, and that ſhe dares not, as we have now ſhewn by Mr.* Claude's *acknowledgment, attribute to her ſelf this Authority, without which there can be neither any certain Inſtruction, nor any aſſured Foundation of Divine Faith, nor in fine, any Church.* Engliſh Reflect. page 80.

Let us talk no longer, I beſeech you, of the *Calvinian* Church, which does not deſire to have any thing to do in ſuch kind of Conteſts. She knows well enough how to make good her own Cauſe, when there is a fit time for it; and if ſhe have not that apparent, and colourable, that is, ſuch a falſe and deceitful ſucceſſion, as worldly ſtrength only can give, ſhe hath however a true and real one, which no Man can take away from her, and ſuch as her hotteſt oppoſers are forced to acknowledg, is good, and of validity ſufficient to conſtitute a true Church.

But this is not a proper place to enter upon that Controverſy; our preſent debate concerns the Character, by which M. *de Meaux* is of opinion, that Children may diſtinguiſh the Church of *Rome* from the *Greek*, the *Æthiopick*, and *Armenian* Churches. Upon which occaſion I need only ſay two things; The one, that ſeeing he will needs make the Truth, and conſequently the Churches infallible Authority to depend upon this Character; he is driven to confeſs, whether he will or no, that there is a point, which even at the uſe of Reaſon, is antecedent to the inſtructions of this Infallible Church, and to the Act of Divine Faith formed upon thoſe inſtructions. For it is one neceſſary previous piece of knowledg, to know that this Church hath the Character *of Succeſſion, with-*

out

out Interruption, Innovation, or Change, which, it is evident, cannot be known any otherwise, than by the use of a Man's Reason. And when he told us such a point could never be found, he never dreamt of this at all. The second thing I have to say, is, That still this Character will be at least as fit an expedient, to confirm the *Greek*, or the *Æthiopian* in their Communion, as any member of the *Latin* Church in his. As brisk and confident as the *Latins* are, they do yet find themselves hard put to it, to vindicate their Church from those Charges of Innovation, which the *Greeks* lay to them, as, in the Use of unleavened Bread, in the Term *Filioq;* in the Creed, in the *Saturday*'s Fast; in the Pope of *Rome*'s pretentions; and, in one word, almost all the Articles that occasioned our separating from them. And as for exterior Succession, what have the *Latins* to recommend them above other Sects? M. *de Meaux* may satisfy himself in saying, *'Twould be no great labour to shew them the exact moment of their Innovation.* I am verily of opinion, that if he undertook the thing, he would not find it so mighty easy as he imagines, unless he made an advantage of the ignorance which at this day is predominant in those Sects, and that were but a very ill way of making Proselites. However, this Character is of such doubtful right between the *Latin*, *Greek* and *Ethiopick* Churches, or, as he himself terms it, so deceiving a mark, that one of these two things must be confest; either, that the *Latins* cannot ground upon it any assurance in favour of their own Communion, nor consequently make an Act of Divine Faith upon the Instructions of their Church; or else, that the *Greeks* and *Ethiopians*, may each of them receive the same assurance for their respective Communions, which they of the *Latin* Church can for theirs. The former of these utterly overthrows M. *de Meaux*'s Principle, and the second is directly what my Argument is designed to prove.

Eng. Reflect. p. 80.

English Refl. p. 81.

M. *de Meaux* tells us, that he needs not enter into this dispute concerning the Succession of the *Greeks* and *Ethiopians*, nor Preach up the Church of *Rome*; that it is enough for him to shew, there is one true Church, somewhere or other, to which we must submit without examining; and besides, that this cannot be the *Calvinistical* Church, since she will her self have one examine after her; so that the excluding of the *Calvinistical*, is the establishing of the *Roman*. *There is no more question*, says he, *to Preach the* Roman *Church, that is, that Body of the Church of which* Rome *is the head, since to him that will chuse between two Churches, the excluding of the one is the establishing of the other, without any need of disputing further for this purpose.*

Pag. 81.

Now this is called Fighting flying. M. *de Meaux*, let him say what he will, hath a great deal of need to enter into this dispute concerning Succession,

ceſſion, for the maintaining his Principle, his Principle becomes evidently uſeleſs, unleſs men can be ſecured which is this true Church that hath Infallibility of her ſide, and to which he is of opinion they ought to ſubmit. And ſince, for the coming to a knowledg of this Church, he gives no other diſtinguiſhing character, but that of Succeſſion, he is under an obligation to ſhew, that this mark is in ſuch a manner peculiar to the Church of *Rome*, that neither the *Greeks* nor *Ethiopians* can pretend to any ſhare in it. Unleſs he proceed thus far, there will be ſtill great reaſon to conclude his Principle vain and deceitful, as leaving men in utter ſuſpenſe and uncertainty betwixt ſeveral Communions that differ from one another. *But it excludes the* Calviniſtical *Church*, ſays he; *and to exclude that, is to eſtabliſh the* Roman, *with relation to the Reformed.* I anſwer, the *Calviniſtical* Church is not at all concerned at being excluded upon a principle ſuppoſed to be falſe and ſophiſtical. Her rights and priviledges are better grounded; and, tho ſhe had no ſhare in that fanciful Character of an apparent Succeſſion, which will always be on the ſtrongeſt ſide; yet the Succeſſion of a True Faith, and True Worſhip, would abundantly make her amends for it. The Jewiſh Rabbins retain ſtill to this day an apparent and exteriour Succeſſion from *Moſes* and the Prophets, for as much as they are the Children of thoſe Scribes and Phariſees, which in Jeſus Chriſt's time filled the Seat of thoſe Divine perſons, and they alſo themſelves have ſat in it: But this does not make them to be their true Succeſſors, becauſe they have neither the Spirit, nor Doctrine of the Prophets, and can ſhew nothing of either, but only the dead Letter.

Is not this of M. *de Meaux*'s a marvellous fine Principle, which after having excluded the *Calviniſtical* Church, determines men to that of *Rome*, merely for the advantage of convenience, that is, becauſe they find it nigh at hand, at their very doors, and becauſe ſhe ſtretches out her Arms ready to receive them, whereas they muſt be forced to go a great way, if they deſigned to make choice of any other, without prejudice ſtill, to ſuch as ſhall happen to be nearer the *Greeks* and *Cophti*; and ſhall find it more advantagious to go over to their ſide? This is our Prelate's Method, which, for fear we ſhould not underſtand perfectly, he takes the pains to explain it himſelf. *None thinks of leaving the* Calviniſts, *but to come to us, when we oblige any one to leave them by ſhewing from their Miniſters own confeſſion, the enormous abſurdities of their Doctrine, the work is perfected, and all the reſt on that occaſion would be to no purpoſe. And to the end the Method of the Conference, and the ſtate of the Queſtion, which is there treated, may be throughly underſtood, it did not aim directly to eſtabliſh the* Roman *Churches:* This is enough, we apprehend it ſufficiently. It is

Engliſh Reflect. Pag. 81.

not by the purity of the Church of *Romes* Doctrine, nor by the excellency of her Worſhip, nor by the peculiar priviledg of her Succeſſion, nor by the ſubſtantial proof of the grounds of her Authority, nor by the peace of Conſcience men ſhall find in their own Breaſts, nor by the neceſſity that there is of making Acts of Divine Faith in her School, that M. *de Meaux* would bring us over to her; but it is upon the account of her being ſo very conveniently ſcituated in reſpect of us. When once he hath ſtript us of the *Calviniſtical* Communion, the work is done, according to the Lawyer's Maxim, *The next of kin goes away with all.* Neceſſity and Convenience, which are two admirable principles of Divine Faith, will preſently prevail with us to put on the *Roman* Communion. I muſt needs own, this Confeſſion hath ſomething of ſincerity in it.

M. de Meaux *his Eighth Reflection Examined, wherein he pretends to ſhew, That the* Proteſtant *Church is formed after the ſame manner that all Heretical Churches have been.*

MOnſieur *de Meaux* complains, that I have paſt over this part of the Conference *in four words*, and given *a very falſe Idea of it*, in ſaying, that the Diſcourſe here grew much more confuſed, and that we talk'd of divers things. He affirms, *That the Converſation was not confuſed in any part, and that it was leſs ſo in this than in the reſt; That all we ſpoke tended to the ſame end; and that* Madamoiſelle de Duras *ſeemed to have redoubled her attention.*

Engliſh. Reflect. page 88.

It is fit I ſhould give him ſatisfaction in theſe particulars, before I proceed any further. I ſhall tell him therefore, that in relating a diſpute, a Man can do no more than rehearſe all that was eſſential in it, or plauſible in the Adverſaries Objections, together with the ſeveral Anſwers and Replies upon thoſe occaſions, and thus much exactly will plainly appear to be done in mine. It is true, I did not burden my Paper with a great many ſuperfluous expreſſions, as he hath been pleaſed to do by his. But I have not diſſembled, or concealed any paſſage that was conſiderable upon the Subject, or had the face of probability in the things he charged me with. *Monſieur* de Condom, I ſaid, *did with abundance of Exaggeration, compare the* Proteſtant's *ſeparating, to that of the Ancient Hereticks, of the* Arians, *and the* Macedonians, *who had ſet up new Churches.* Let his own Relation be peruſed, where he hath inſerted whatever he

 pleaſed,

pleaſed, and then judge whether theſe four words do not contain all that was material in the point. What need was there for me to take any other notice of that exceeding laviſhneſs of words which attended ſo very little matter, than to give it the name of Exaggeration? To what purpoſe ſhould I, merely for the entertainment of my Readers, reckon up particularly a long train of words perfectly uſeleſs and ill employed, of which this Exaggeration conſiſted? This, I confeſs, I never thought my ſelf obliged to do.

For the Confuſion I mentioned in this part of the Conference, I will not contradict M. *de Meaux*; but for all that, what I wrote upon this occaſion is every ſyllable of it true. The company roſe, part of the ſtanders by went off, M. *de Meaux* then ſpoke a great deal, without allowing himſelf time to hear the anſwers that were made; he talkt with a great deal of heat, and many digreſſions; the Diſcourſe was no longer what it had continued till then, I mean regular and compoſed, each perſon ſpeaking without interruption, and hearing quietly in his turn; In ſhort, there was no Method obſerved afterwards. If *Madamoiſelle de Duras* was more attentive now than before, this is more than I know: Poſſibly the noiſe awakened her attention.

But let that be as it will; this very M. *de Meaux*, who complains of me for paſſing over this part of the diſpute *in four words*, does both in his Relation, and his Reflection, paſs it over without ſo much as one ſingle word, or ſaying any thing at all, of three Conſiderations which I offered againſt the Parallel he drew between the *Proteſtants* and Hereticks heretofore, and the Concluſion he inferred from thence, That we had ſet up a new Church. For I obſerved to him on the one hand, the injuſtice of ſuch proceedings, which without any regard at all to Reaſon or Truth, continually gave the Cauſe to the ſtrongeſt ſide; On the other hand, I made it appear, that his prejudices did by a manifeſt illuſion confound falſe Antiquity with true, by ſuppoſing, that if it could be ſaid to any Exterior Society, *You were not yeſterday the ſame you are to day*, this was enough to prove that Society falſe and novel. I ſhewed him further, of how mighty dangerous conſequence that prejudice of his was, in that it utterly took away all the means of putting a ſtop to the progreſs of Errors and Superſtitions, upon pretence of not ſetting up a new Church. All this may be ſeen in my Relation, Page M. *de Meaux*, inſtead of giving this account in his, brings me in making the pleaſanteſt figure in the world. He makes me there moſt impertinently confeſs (with a, *One might, ſaid Mr.* Claude) a thing utterly falſe, and which I all along aſſerted to him, he could never prove. He denies there another plain matter of fact, without offering any other reaſon for that denial, but this,

Meaux's Eng. Co. p. 44.

Ibid. Supr. this, *Ha Sir, 'tis what I shall never believe*; and hereupon he makes me hold my peace, and rest satisfied. He traverses there a great many things very foreign to our business, and the Question, and invents a passage of his own head, making me say after an apish trifling manner, *Ha Sir, what Praying to Saints, and Purgatory?* He argues there at a wild extravagant rate against our Separation, upon principles which he knows well enough we deny, without allowing me to take the freedom of telling him, *I did not agree to them.* He draws there throughout, his own Character and Representation, like that of a Conquëror, in pursuit of a flying Enemy, and continually holding his Sword at the back of him, and makes me ever now and then turn back my head as it were to speak one poor word. In short, the air of his Relation in this Part hath something in it so very odd, and so disagreeable to the gravity of this Prelate, that it is its own Confutation; and I could have been very well satisfied to have left it to its own weakness, had not M. *de Meaux* his unjust complaints obliged me to speak something concerning it.

Page 45. comp. with the *French.*

I had added also a fourth Consideration, which was, That the *Protestants* behaviour in separating from the Church of *Rome*, was very like that of the Apostles of Jesus Christ, with respect to the Jews and Pagans; and that, as M. *de Meaux* upbraids us now, with not being joined in Communion with any body that was before in being; with being Innovators, with having deserted the Communion of all Christian Societies; in the very same manner did those Jews and Pagans upbraid the Primitive Christians, telling them, that they were Preachers of new Doctrines, that they were not joyned to any body before in being, and that they had deserted the Communion of all the World.

It concerns us now to enquire, whether the truth of this Consideration will bear a dispute; and whether, granting it to be true, it must not be confest, that it shames and confounds the deceitful Parallel objected to us, between the modern *Protestants* and ancient Hereticks. Let us now for the clearer illustration of the matter, take up M. *de Meaux*'s own Argument, as he himself hath given it to us in this most triumphant part of his Relation, and try if my four words are not enough to overthrow all the four and twenty pages written by the Bishop upon this occasion.

Meaux's Eng. Conf. p. 46. It may be objected to your Church, says he, *Did you find one in the whole world to which you joyned your selves? Did you embrace the* Greek, *the* Armenian, *or the* Ethiopian *Church, when you forsook the* Roman? *Can we not mark you the precise date of your Churches, and say to all that Church, to all that exterior Society in which you are Minister, you were not yesterday?* I must confess this discourse astonished me; for a Man need but change the

the words never ſo little, and they will be applied full as well to the Church of the Apoſtles. *Did you find one in the whole world,* would the *Jew* ſay, *to which you joyned your ſelves? Did you embrace the Church of* Alexandria, Samaria, *or* Babylon, *when you forſook that of* Jeruſalem? *Can we not mark you the preciſe date of your Churches, and ſay to all that Church, to all that exterior Society, in which you are an Apoſtle, You were not yeſterday?*

M. *de Meaux* brings in Mr. *Claude* here ſaying, *Were we not of this Church? We went not, we were driven out of it. We were Excommunicated in the Council of* Trent. *Thus we went forth, but we carried the Church with us.* Whereupon he adds, *What diſcourſe is this, Sir? If you had not been driven out, would you have ſtaid in it? To what purpoſe then is that Command ſo often repeated amongſt you, Go forth of* Babylon, *my people?* What hath the *Jew* more to do upon this example given him by M. *de Meaux*, but to bring in a Chriſtian ſaying to him, *Were not we of the Jewiſh Church? We went not out, we were driven out of it. We were excommunicated by the Sanhedrim at* Jeruſalem. *Thus we went forth, but we carried the Church along with us.* To this the *Jew* would naturally reply, *What diſcourſe is this Sir? If you had not been driven out, would you have ſtaid in it? To what purpoſe then is that Command ſo famous among you, Save your ſelves from this untoward Generation? And why did your* Paul *forſake the Synagogue of* Epheſus, *ſeparate his Diſciples, and ſet up Congregations apart by himſelf?* Ibid. Acts 2.40. Acts. 19.

M. *de Meaux* carries on his diſcourſe, *Well Sir,* (ſays he) *it is true, you were driven out, This is common to you with all Hereticks. The Church in which they received Baptiſm caſt them forth, excommunicated them. They would perhaps have willingly ſtaid in it to corrupt and ſeduce, but the Church cut them off. And, as to what you ſay, That you were in this Church, which caſt you out, and that you carried the Church with you, What Heretick may not ſay as much?* Is not this exactly a Leſſon for a *Jew? Well,* will he ſay, *it is true you were driven out, This will be common to you with all your Hereticks. The Church in which they received Baptiſm, will excommunicate, and drive them out, as that in which you received Circumciſion hath driven out and excommunicated you. You would perhaps have willingly ſtaid in it, to ſtir up ſedition among all the* Jews *throughout the World, but the Synagogue cut you off. And as to what you ſay, that you have carried the Church with you, Which of your Hereticks will not be able to ſay as much?* Ibid.

The Ancient Hereticks, proceeds M. *de Meaux, were all able to ſay as well as you, That they were condemned by their Adverſaries; for they were not made to ſit amongſt the Judges, when their Novelty was condemned. All your Hereticks,* will the *Jew* ſay, *are able to ſay as well as your Primitive Chriſtians, that they were condemned by their Adverſaries; and as your Apoſtles were not made* Ibid.

to

to ſit amongſt the Judges when their Novelty was condemned, ſo neither do you make your Hereticks ſit as ſuch.

Ibid. Page 46. M. *de Meaux* goes on. *But*, replied Mr. *Claude*, *we agree not with this Novelty. What is in the Scripture, is not new. Patience*, Sir, *I beſeech you, ſaid I to him. None of the ancient Hereticks agreed the Novelty of their Doctrine, they all alledged the Holy Scripture for themſelves: But there was one Novelty which they could not deny, to wit, That the Body of their Church was not yeſterday, and you granted it.* See here again the *Jews* plea exactly. *But*, will he ſay, *You agree not this Novelty? St.* Paul *on the contrary affirms, that he Preached none other, than what* Moſes *and the Prophets had foretold ſhould come. Patience, I beſeech you, none of your Hereticks will agree the Novelty of his Doctrine, they all alledge Scripture for themſelves. But there is one Novelty, which neither you, nor they can deny, to wit, That the body of your Church was not yeſterday.*

Muſt not M. *de Meaux* now reflect with ſomething of diſſatisfaction, upon his having put weapons into the hands of Infidels, to fight againſt Jeſus Chriſt's Church withal? And having utterly incapacitated himſelf for defending the Chriſtian's cauſe againſt the calumnies of theſe wretches? He made it his buſineſs to overthrow us, and never perceived that the ſame blow he meant for us, does alſo ſtrike at the Holy Apoſtles, and the Church which they gathered together. He imagined, that the ranking us with Hereticks, and drawing up the ſame charge againſt us, would be matter of ſhame and confuſion, and render us odious in the eyes of the World; and he hath by doing ſo, given us the mighty comfort of being put in the ſame rank with the firſt believers of Chriſtianity. I ſay the mighty comfort, for when we are reproached and upbraided only with ſuch things as might as well have been objected againſt them; when they are fain to borrow the words and accuſations of Infidels, to draw up an accuſation againſt us, we will not only bear the misfortune patiently, but we will make our boaſt of it, and be thankful to Almighty God for it.

It is true, M. *de Meaux* is not ſatisfied we ſhould quietly enjoy the honour he hath done us. Beſides the Arguments he offered againſt it in the Conference it ſelf, and which were anſwered by me then upon the ſpot, he hath thought fit to add here ſome freſh conſiderations, which it will concern us to examine. In the firſt place, he obſerves to us, *that Jeſus Chriſt, who was authoriſed himſelf, had no need of any Succeſſion to make himſelf believed.* This is without diſpute; But then why may we not acknowledg the ſame privileg due to Jeſus Chriſt's Goſpel too? Hath this Divine word any need of Succeſſion to give it Authority; and on the contrary, let Errors and Superſtitions ſhew never ſo long a Succeſſion, though it be of *Thirteen* or *Fourteen hunders years* ſtanding, are they the

Engliſh Refl. p. 89.

the leſs dangerous, or do they not as much deſerve to be rejected upon that account? The Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt is heavenly by its own nature, it receives no acceſſion by a ſucceſſion of ſeveral Ages, nor any diminution by ſuch a ſucceſſion being interrupted; and as as for Errors, they being the Tares which the Enemy hath caſt into the Lord's Field, upon the good Corn, I own there may ſome of them be found of very long continuance, but their Antiquity though never ſo conſiderable, cannot have been from the beginning, nor alter the condition of their nature. *A Cuſtom without Truth*, ſays St. *Cyprian*, *is but an old Error.*

But let us attend to M. *de Meaux.* He tells us, *That Jeſus Chriſt, to inculcate to us how neceſſary it is, for the true Religion to have a Succeſſion always manifeſt, would, at his coming into the World, find there a Church actually ſubſiſting in its whole State; that he was born, and lived in this Church actually ſubſiſting; that is, in the Synagogue.* Was there ever any thing ſaid leſs to the purpoſe than this? Jeſus Chriſt was born in a Church actually ſubſiſting; I agree to it; but this was in a Church infected with abundance of Errors. In a Church full of *pernicious Maxims and practices*; by M. *de Meaux* his own confeſſion, in a Church, whoſe Aſſemblies were not Infallible. If this Prelate will be ſatisfied, we ſhould ſay as much concerning the *Latin* Church at the time of the Reformation, we are immediately agreed. It was a Church actually ſubſiſting, but a Church that ſtood in need of being reformed; a Church, whoſe Aſſemblies were not infallible, and conſequently a Church, whoſe decitions men were not bound to reſt ſatisfied in without examining.

Ep. 47.

Engl. Reflect. p 89.

Meaux's Engliſh Conf. page 19.

Moreover, might not the *Jews* at the time when Jeſus Chriſt went about to reform that *Jewiſh* Church, ſay the ſame thing to him, which this Prelate does to us, *Your Reformation was not Yeſterday?* To alledge againſt this Objection, the examples of *John* Baptiſt, *Anna* the Propheteſs, *Simeon*, and ſome others, who did not partake in the publick Corruptions of the Synagogue, (as M. *de Meaux* does) is only to urge ſome private perſons, and thoſe a very few too, who not appearing openly, nor making a ſeparate body, could not be ſufficient to ſhew ſuch an Exterior, and conſtantly viſible Succeſſion, as M *de Meaux* requires, and holds to be neceſſary for the preventing this Objection, *You were not Yeſterday.* Or, if ſo inconſiderable a number of private perſons be enough to prove the ſucceſſion now in debate between us, he muſt needs be ſenſible, that the Proteſtants can produce at leaſt as many in behalf of their Cauſe, and ſo by this very allegation, he overthrows his own charge of Novelty againſt them.

Beſides this, it is very ſure, the Body actually ſubſiſting, in which Jeſus Chriſt was born, and lived, could not be called the true Church of God, any otherwiſe than with reſpect to thoſe particular perſons, who might

might ſtill live, and conſult their own Salvation, under a Corrupt diſpenſation, by ſevering the clean from the unclean. For, as I ſaid in another place, it is not at all probable, that God would conduct his own Children to Everlaſting life by ſuch ways, as the pernicious Maxims and Practices which prevailed under that diſpenſation. Now this is the expreſs caſe of the *Latin* Church before the Reformation; ſhe could not any longer be lookt upon as God's true Church, except with relation to thoſe private perſons who lived under her Miniſtry, and yet did not partake in her ſuperſtitions and errors. So that if this would juſtifie the Apoſtles, in ſaying, *Our Church is not Yeſterday, nor t'other day, it is not new.* The *Proteſtants* may plead the very ſame thing, and M. *de Meaux* hath not hitherto advanced any Argument that makes our caſe different from that of the Primitive Chriſtian Church.

He proceedes and ſays, *That the Apoſtles perſiſted publickly in the Service of the Temple, which was then the moſt Authentical Mark of Communion. That they were not indeed ſeen, whatever might be ordained againſt them, to have ever withdrawn from it, as long as the Temple was in being, and the Synagogue could keep either its exterior form, or, even any appearance of its ancient ſtate: That God, who would, in fine, have his Children entirely ſeparated from the* Jews, *had firſt extinguiſht in this ungrateful People, by a manifeſt Reprobation, with the Sacrifice and Prieſthood, all the Marks of the Church; ſo that 'tis apparent, the Synagogue with its Temple fell to ruine, before the Children of God departed from it.*

Engliſh Reflect. p. 89.

But M. *de Meaux* is miſtaken both in the matter of fact, and in the reaſon of the thing. He miſtakes the fact; for although the Apoſtles did not at the very firſt utterly forſake the Temple, yet they did make an actual, true, and poſitive ſeparation, before ever the fall of the Temple, and the Synagogues, happened.

This may be proved by ſeveral undeniable Arguments. The firſt is, their Aſſembling together, ſometimes indeed in the Temple, but ſometimes too by themſelves out of the Temple, and the Synagogues. *They continued ſtedfaſtly,* ſays St. *Luke*, in *the Apoſtles Doctrine and fellowſhip, and in breaking of Bread, and in prayers. They continued daily with one accord in the Temple,* ſays the ſame Hiſtorian, *and breaking Bread from Houſe to Houſe.* And a little after, *And daily in the Temple, and in every Houſe, they ceaſed not to teach and preach Jeſus Chriſt.* By this breaking of Bread, as even our Adverſaries themſelves have explained it, is meant the celebrating, and communicating in the Euchariſt, which was then done in Congregations met in private Houſes, and could not be done in the Temple. In like manner it is ſaid, *Act.* 20. that on the Firſt day of the Week, the Diſciples, that is, the Believers at *Troas*, met together in an upper Chamber, that *Paul* did there preach to them, communic[illegible] with them, and continue his ſpeech to them all Night.

Act. 2.42. Ibid. v. 46. Act. 5.42. V. 7, 11.

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It appears further by the same History, that, although the Apostles did not scruple going into the Synagogues to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ there, nevertheless, when the *Jews* grew obstinate, and withstood the Word, the Apostles departed from them, and made choice of other places, for them and the Church to meet in. Thus St. *Paul* did at *Ephesus*, he went at his first coming thither into the Synagogue, and disputed there for the space of Three months, and there converted many to the Faith; *But when divers were hardned*, says St. *Luke*, *and believed not, but spoke evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the Disciples, disputing daily in the School of one Tyrannus. And this continued by the space of Two years.* Act. 19. 9, 10.

But the most unanswerable demonstration, that the reason of their going still into the Temple, and Synagogues, was not because they still held communion with the unbelieving *Jews*, is, their setting up in every place Churches, which made distinct bodies; Churches which had their Pastors, different from those of the *Jews*; their Deacons, and in a word their whole Constitution and Government quite and clean distinct from that of the Synagogues. This is made out by the Fourteenth Chapter of the Book of Acts, where it is said, That after *Paul* and *Barnabas* had preached the Gospel in the City of *Derbe*, they returned to *Lystra*, and *Iconium*, and *Antioch*, and by the advice of the Assemblies, *ordained them Elders in every Church*; that is, Pastors, *and prayed with fasting.* Nay, even in *Jerusalem* it self, which was the very Center of the *Jewish* Communion, the Christians had besides their Apostles, their Priests, or Elders, and their Deacons, who met with the People, not only for the Exercise of Religious Duties, but for other business besides, and to compose any differences that might happen, as well in matters of Doctrine, as Discipline, and Methods of Government. There it was, that the first Assembly was held, which determined the difference between the *Greeks* and *Hebrews*, concerning the *Grecian* Widows, who thought themselves neglected in the daily Ministrations; there the first Council was held likewise, in which *the Apostles, the Elders, and the whole Church* assisted, upon the Question started at *Antioch*, concerning the observance due to the Ceremonies of the Law. V. 21, 23. Act. 16. Act. 15.

Lastly, So far were they from a perswasion, that they ought to continue in Communion with the unbelieving *Jews*, that in this very Council they gave the converted *Gentiles* a perfect liberty from observing the Law of *Moses*. *Why*, says St. *Peter*, *Will ye tempt God to put a Yoke upon the Neck of the Disciples, which neither our Fathers, nor we were able to bear?* And in vindication of this freedom it is, that St. *Paul* disputes with so much vehemency in his Epistle to the *Galatians*, against some false Act. 15. 10.

Teachers who endeavoured to bring the Disciples into bondage unde those Ceremonies again. *Upon this account he withstood St.* Peter *to the face, saying to him, If thou being a Jew livest after the manner of the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, Why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?* Words that plainly shew St. *Peter* himself to have been at that time no observer of the Jewish Rites.

Gal. 2. 11, 14.

Where can it be then that M. *de Meaux* found out, that the Apostles continued in Communion with the Synagogue, so long as the Temple subsisted? They held their Assemblies apart, they set up distinct Churches, and convened Councils apart. These Churches had their Sacraments distinct, their Ministers and Pastors distinct, and their Government distinct. They discharged their Proselites from the practice of the Law, they did not observe it themselves, and all this long before the fall of the Synagogue. Whan can a man desire more particular and express, to denote an actual separation, and breach of Communion?

English Reflect. page 89.

But, says this Prelate, *The Apostles persisted publickly in the Service of the Temple, which was then the most Authentick mark of Communion.* He is mistaken here in the Reason of the thing, as he was before in the matter of fact. If the Apostles did not at first forsake the Temple, this was for other Reasons very different from that which he fancies to himself. They made the use they did of it, with a design to gain more convenience, and better opportunities of preaching the Gospel of Christ to the *Jews*, whom in the first place it must have been preached to. They did it to draw off that *Remnant according to the Election of Grace*, mentioned by St. *Paul* in his Epistle to the *Romans*, from the midst of that lost Communion, with greater ease. They did it, to discharge their duty to Godward in giving this rebellious and unthankful People, the several warnings and summons which his Justice was pleased to order should go before their last dreadful Ruine. They did it, to testifie by this behaviour, the regard and veneration they had for the Blood of *Abraham*, and for the Covenant of God made with his People, who, though already fallen into the deepest and most heinous of all sins, yet was still within a time, and state of vocation. Lastly, This was to pay their last duties and respects to their miserable Country, whose final Condemnation now drew near, and which stood just upon the brink of Ruine, just as we attend upon dying men, till they have fetcht their very last gasp, and upon their bodies when dead too, till they are laid in the Grave.

Rom. 11.

But now to imagine from hence, that they still maintained Communion with wicked men and unbelievers, and that they publickly profest the same Religion with them, after that they had crucified the Lord of Glory, and declared their obstinate perseverance in this fault, is what can never be said,

said, without great and manifest injury to the blessed Apostles of Jesus Christ. I confess they did still practice some particulars of the Legal service upon occasion; thus we read that *Paul* circumcised *Timothy*, and bore part of the Charges with four men, that had a *Nazarite*'s vow upon them: But this was nothing less than an Argument of Communion with the unbelieving *Jews*. In the beginning of Christianity, those Ceremonies of the Law were as yet indifferent as to their use. Their having been instituted by God at first, and it not being possible to abolish them, but by little and little, till that were done, they might very innocently practice some of them, when prudential Reasons, and Christian Charity obliged them to it, as did St. *Paul* then, who was advised by St. *James* to act as he did. What they did then in this case, was neither done in favour of the unbelieving *Jews*, nor to signify their holding Communion with them, but merely to avoid giving offence to weak Christians, who could not all of the sudden shake off these Ceremonies, nor perfectly get loose from the prejudices birth and education had rooted in them. The same thing must be said of Jesus Christ's eating and drinking after his Resurrection, which was so far like this, that he did it not to satisfy any necessity of nature, or because he continued still to partake of the same animal life with other men; but he did it by way of condescention to the weakness of his Disciples Faith.

Acts 16.3. Chap. 21, 24, 26.

What M. *de Meaux* further affirms, *That God had by a manifest reprobation extinguisht in the people of the* Jews, *with the Sacrifice and Priesthood, all the marks of the Church, and left them no hope of being establisht again*, is very true; but the addition which follows, *That 'tis apparent from hence, the Synagogue with its Temple fell to ruine, before the Children of God departed from it*, is a consequence depending merely on his pleasure. We have just now seen by plain proof, that the Children of God had already departed from it, before there was so much as any appearance of its ruine. After the Synagogue had been guilty of such horrible extravagancies, the Apostles could not in point of Conscience maintain Communion with it.

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Lastly, M *de Meaux* resolving to drive on his notions as far as ever they can go, concludes, *That to the end such a fall of his heretofore chosen people, and the Divorce declared to the Synagogue, formerly his Spouse, might not give the least pretext of suspecting any like event in time to come, he had caused this future fall and Divorce, to be foretold by all his Prophets, as a singular example of his wrath; and had at the same time protested, that no such thing should ever befall that Church with which he had made an Eternal Covenant; that besides all this, and tho the reprobation of the Synagogue was clearly explicated in the Scripture, and tho the Apostles, without making any Innovation in*

English Reflect. Pag. 89, 90.

the Doctrine, did but follow him, who had till their time been always without any Interruption expected; nevertheless, because there was in this Action some rupture with the Synagogue, heretofore the true Church; to Authorise them in this, there was no less required than Jesus Christ himself, present on the Earth, with all the Authority of his Father: And in a word, to dissent from the Sentiments of the Synagogue, tho besides convinced by the Scriptures, 'twas necessary that Jesus Christ the Corner stone, in whom all was to be united, should appear visibly on the Earth, with the inconteſtable marks of his Mission.

But how comes it to pass, I wonder, that this Prelate, so quicksighted and judicious at other times, should here content himself with such wretched Divinity as this? God never hath, nor ever will divorce his True Church. For this, consisting in his Elect, and true Believers, the unchangeable constancy of God's Election hath all along secured her from this unhappiness, as well under the Old, as under the New-Testament, and will for ever continue to secure her. The Synagogue which fell, was a Church only in Figure and Type, and such a one as God had only a temporal and external Covenant with; and this therefore having no fixed, everlasting foundation, fell as soon as the time appointed for its continuance was expired. But in this fall, the true Church, that is, in St. *Paul*'s language, *The remnant according to the Election of Grace*, fell not; this always subsisted, and with it Jesus Christ's Church was united, not with the Body of the Synagogue. In this was its constant Succession, and true Antiquity; in this it was, that no new Church sprung up, but the old one was continued from *Abel* to that very time, and by this means all the calumnies of the *Jews* vanish into nothing, and all their imputations of being a Novel and upstart Church are taken off.

Under the New Testament God did not constitute any Typical or Figurative Church, as he had done under the old. *His Dove is one*, and consists o his true Believers only. Upon this account it is, that the Prophets never mention any second divorce, because in truth it is impossible there should ever be one. There can be no divorce, where there is not a temporal and earthly Covenant; But all here is Eternal, because all is real, everlasting, and spiritual. It is true, the Enemy scatters his Tares here among God's good Corn, but this neither makes a true Church, nor a typical one; for the typical Church was of God's own Institution, but these Tares are not so. They come by means of the Enemy, and are sown here by his hand, so that they make only a false and hypocritical Church, or, to use M. *de Meaux* his own expressions, a *Church counterfeited by Nature, or by the Devil.* So that when these Tares, that is, these Hypocrites and false Christians, who have only the

the profeſſion of the true Faith, happen to deviate openly into Errors and Superſtitions, this is not, in proper ſpeaking, either a divorce, or a fall; becauſe a Divorce ſuppoſes a Marriage, and a fall implies that the party once ſtood, neither of which can truly be ſaid of theſe men. What is it then? 'Tis indeed only a manifeſt diſcovery of their hypocriſy, an effect of the blindneſs, levity, and corruption of men not regenerated by God, nor joyned to him by any good principle. And this is the true Reaſon why God foretold by his Prophets the fall of the Jewiſh people, and his divorce of their Synagogue, as a ſingular example of his wrath, and that he had proteſted nothing of that nature ſhould happen under the New Teſtament; *viz.* That under the Old Teſtament there was a typical Church, of which God himſelf was the Author and Founder; whereas under the New, there was to be a ſpiritual Church compoſed of his Elect, and to be no other beſides that.

Theſe are the ſound and exact notions given us in Scripture upon this Subject. And if M. *de Meaux* had conſidered them a little more carefully, he would have perceived all his Objections to fall immediately, and not have troubled himſelf as he has done, to tell us a great many things to no purpoſe, nor engaged in maintaining ſome others, which can never be made good. He would have perceived, that, as God's true Church under the Old Teſtament, ſubſiſted ſtill in the midſt of all the Synagogue's confuſions, tho theſe confuſions had oftentimes very much darkned her, and made her ſcarce diſcernable by the eyes of men; ſhe has alſo in like manner conſtantly ſubſiſted in the New Teſtament, in the midſt of all the diſorders and confuſions of the Tares, which have oftentimes covered her to ſuch a degree, that ſhe almoſt ceaſed to be viſible. He would have perceived, that, as under the Old Teſtament this True Church conſiſted in ſome Elect only, which God had reſerved to himſelf in the midſt of the publick Corruptions, although theſe perſons did not make a ſeparate Body by themſelves; ſo likewiſe under the New it hath all along conſiſted in the company of predeſtinated Believers, whom God hath preſerved ſafe from the infection of a wicked World, tho they continued ſtill in external Communion with others not ſo. He would have perceived, that, as the Church of the Apoſtles, tho it had no relation to the Synagogue, nor any other exterior body before in being, was not new for all that, becauſe it was in Conjunction with thoſe particular perſons reſerved of God; in like manner the Proteſtant Church, tho it have no relation at all to that vaſt croud of worldly and ſuperſtitious people, which make up the greateſt number of the exterior body of the *Latins*, nor to the *Greek*, *Ethiopick*, or *Armenian* Societies, nevertheleſs is not a new Church, becauſe united with thoſe true Believers, which.

which God reſerved to himſelf in this body, notwithſtanding the general corruption that invaded it; and by conſequence, that there is nothing more falſe than this Principle, *That there is no way to avoid being a new Church, but holding Communion with ſome exterior body that had a Being before.* He would have perceived, that, as by this means the Calumnies of the *Jews* concerning the Apoſtle's Church being Novel, were refuted; ſo do we likewiſe by the ſame, anſwer thoſe that upbraid our Church with novelty; ſo that this accuſation cannot be made good againſt us, without abetting and giving Authority to that of the Infidels againſt the primitive Chriſtians.

He would have perceived, that if the ſame thing might be ſaid to the Hereticks of former Ages, this was often by accident only, not becauſe they were Hereticks, but in that they were not the ſtronger party, and the greater number ſtood firm for the truth, which yet may ſometimes change to the other ſide. From whence it follows, that this is an illgrounded prejudice, becauſe it was as capable of being uſed againſt the Orthodox Chriſtians, as by them againſt the Hereticks. Thus in effect the *Millenaries* might have objected once to the Orthodox, *You were not yeſterday*, it being very certain, as *Pamelius*, *Bellarmin*, and many others have obſerved, that moſt of the Fathers for the three firſt Centuries were *Millenaries*. Even the *Arians* themſelves, if we will take *Petavius* the Jeſuit's word for it, might have made the ſame objection to *Alexander* Biſhop of *Alexandria* when he condemned *Arius*, and to the reſt of the Orthodox when they conſented to that Condemnation. For this Jeſuit reckons among the Ancients, that wrote amiſs upon this ſubject, even before *Arius* his time, *Juſtin Martyr*, *Athenagoras*, *Tatian*, *Theophilus* of *Antioch*, *Irenæus*, *Clemens Romanus*, *Clemens Alexandrinus*, *Origen*, *Dionyſius* of *Alexandria*, *Gregory Thaumaturgus*, *Methodius*, *Lucian* the Martyr, *Tertullian*, *Lactantius*; that is in ſhort, almoſt all the firſt and moſt ancient Writers we have. Which, by the way, ſufficiently ſhews, where that opinion may end at laſt, which ſome people are continually ringing in our ears, of the inſufficiency of Scripture, and the neceſſity of Tradition. He would have perceived, that all his diſcourſe upon the Synagogues fall, of the Divorce God had foretold by his Prophets, as a ſingular example of his wrath; of the ruine of his Temple, and the neceſſity of Jeſus Chriſt's preſence to warrant the forſaking of that Communion, are only weak and uſeleſs words; becauſe all this does not any way hinder the Apoſtles Church from being new, and if no more than this be ſaid, the *Jews* objection, *You were not yeſterday*, will remain in full force ſtill.

Pam. Not. ad Cypr. de mart. Bellar. de Rom. Pon. lib. 13. c. 17. Petav. Theol. dogm. l. 1. cap. 3, 4.

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He would have perceived, that the neceſſity of Jeſus Chriſt's preſence upon Earth, in order to make the deſerting the Jewiſh Synagogue lawful, did depend upon a particular reaſon, which can be of no conſequence or advantage at all to thoſe of the *Latin* Communion; for this was therefore neceſſary, becauſe, as I took notice before, the Synagogue was a typical Church, inſtituted formerly by God himſelf, and which therefore, by virtue of that Divine Inſtitution, muſt continue till the manifeſtation of the *Meſſiah*, the ſubſtance and original of all the legal figures. But that under the New Teſtament the caſe is much otherwiſe with that rabble of Hypocrites, who are mixed in the ſame exterior Society with true Believers, becauſe theſe are not of God's inſtitution, but the enemies ſcattering; ſo that when they have once declared themſelves oppoſers of the Truth, in any of the eſſential parts of Religion; nothing can oblige men to hold Communion with them any longer. It is therefore very poor arguing, to ſay thus, There was a neceſſity that Jeſus Chriſt ſhould perſonally appear in the World, to warrant mens forſaking the Synagogues Communion; therefore there is the ſame neceſſity that Jeſus Chriſt ſhould come down upon Earth once more, to juſtify mens withdrawing themſelves from the Church of *Rome*'s Communion.

Laſtly, if M. *de Meaux* had applied himſelf a little more cloſely to the Conſideration of his Subject, he would have perceived, that nothing more odd and ſtrange, to ſpeak but modeſtly and tenderly of it, could poſſibly be advanced, than what he tells us, *That to diſſent from the Sentiments of the Synagogue, tho beſides convinced by the Scriptures, it was neceſſary that Jeſus Chriſt ſhould appear viſibly.* What? Is this Prelate then of opinion, that, before Jeſus Chriſt's appearance in the World, the Synagogues Authority was ſo abſolute, that men were bound to adore even its very Errors and Corruptions, tho ſhe were convicted of theſe clearly and fully by the Scriptures? Does he think, that, for the retaining ſtill ſome Communion with her, a Man were obliged to adopt all her Sentiments, that is, as M. *de Meaux* hath delivered himſelf, her *pernicious Maxims and Practices?* At what rate then does he prize the Truth of God, when he thus prefers a Lye, nay, a Lye plainly detected by the Scriptures, before it? A Synagogue convicted by the Scriptures, is at leaſt in this reſpect, a Society in oppoſition to the Scriptures. In this oppoſition ſhe is in the wrong, and manifeſtly ſo, becauſe convicted of that Error. What authority ſoever ſhe can have then, ſhe abuſes it, and employs it to ill purpoſes againſt God, and againſt her own duty. And yet notwithſtanding all this, without the viſible preſence of Jeſus Chriſt upon Earth, unleſs he vouchſafe to deſcend from Heaven in perſon, we muſt according to M. *de Meaux*, prefer this manifeſt abuſe of her Authority, which the Synagogue is guilty of, before

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before all the Divine Authority that rules in the Scriptures; *To dissent*, says he, *from her sentiments, tho besides convinced by the Scriptures, 'twas necessary Jesus Christ should appear visibly.* Thus you see, how far blindness goes; you see how wretched a slavery they would have men truckle to, and how the spirit of the *Roman* Hierarchy would exalt, and extend it self.

I am really dissatisfied, for M. *de Meaux* his own sake, that he should conclude his Reflections upon our Conference, with so wild and extravagant a passage; a passage, in which the Authority of Gods Word is perfectly trodden under foot; in which the Scripture is degraded from all the Characters of its being Divine; in which Error is set up in the Throne, and the Majestick Excellence of Truth and Right, reproached and disgraced. But this God in his wise Providence hath thought fit to suffer, that if the strength and the evidence of Reason, and that Justice which I have endeavoured to follow through this whole Book, fail to make the Impressions they ought to make upon mens hearts, yet at least the terrors of Conscience might influence them upon this occasion; and that such as are not sufficiently wrought upon by the charms of truth, might however be so by the horror and deformity of its contrary; so that the Gospel of Jesus Christ might eternally reign over us. Now to the only Wise, and only Infallible God, be Honour and Glory for ever and ever. *Amen.*

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The Ninth Reflection Examined, concerning the Notion of the true Church, to wit, whether it consist of true Believers only, or whether it be composed of wicked men, and Reprobates also?

Monsieur de Meaux, in the Advertisement before his Book, hath very judiciously observed, that the publick has nothing to do with such personal disputes as might arise between him and me concerning our Conference; and that *in these Alterations, the best course a prudent Reader can take, is to search into the bottom of Matters.* This advice ought to engage him, and me, to make this search for our particular parts, and for this purpose to range the dispute in such a method as may not impose upon the Readers, but such, as being most remote from Equivocation and Sophistry, may take the plainest and most compendious way of deciding the main point in Controversy. For this Reason, being about to examin M. *de Meaux*'s Reflections, I chuse to begin with those which respect my Answer to his Discourse, where the bottom of the matter is the subject of the Debate, and then to come afterwards to those other, which relate to our Conference, and wherein we are more particularly and personally concerned. M. *de Meaux*, who hath himself made this distinction between them, had in my poor opinion done better to have laid them down in this order, because it is the order of time, and nature, which a Man cannot go from, without some danger of confounding Matters, and perplexing his Readers. I will enter therefore upon this examination, at the Ninth Reflection; the business of which is, to settle the notion of Jesus Christ's true Church, to which he has been pleased to make such wonderful gracious promises; for there indeed we ought to begin. So long as we are not agreed upon the very subject matter of our dispute, but have different Idea's of that, till we have illustrated the matter, and shewn which of these two is the truer and more natural, it may reasonably be said, not only that we dispute in the Air, and to no purpose, but that we dispute rather to lose and hide Truth, than to find or discover it more clearly to others. He and I are both of us concerned to avoid these imputations, which will be so much to our prejudice for our own sakes, besides that our concern for the Glory of God, and the Salvation of mens Souls, are motives of infinitely greater consideration.

Eng. Adv. Page 2.

The dispute between M. *de Meaux* and me is upon this point, Whether, after an Ecclesiastical Assembly hath decided matters of Religion,

private persons are priviledged and obliged to examine those decisions? or whether they ought to acquiesce, and their Consciences rest fully satisfied, so submitting themselves blindfold to the supreme and absolute Authority of such an Assembly? M. *de Meaux* maintains the latter of these two, and I the former.

He grounds his Opinion upon this Principle, That the Church, to which Jesus Christ hath made all those Promises contained in the Gospel, as, that she shall endure for ever, shall be always visible, and never fail to vanquish the Gates of Hell, is that very visible and exterior Society, *which makes profession to believe in Jesus Christ, and govern it self by his Word*, and is composed of good and bad men, of elect and reprobate, of true believers and worldly persons mixt together. From which Principle he infers, That there being no Salvation to be obtained but in the Communion of this Church, and under her Ministry, there must be due from every member an entire submission to all the Doctrines taught by her, and that it is really a fault to pretend to examine them.

This Argument of M. *de Meaux*'s is defective in the two main and most essential parts of an Argument, I mean both in its Principle and its Consequence. He first lays a false supposition, and afterwards draws a wrong conclusion from it. I say, it is defective in its Consequence, because, tho we should allow his supposition to be true, to wit, that Jesus Christ's Church did consist of all this exterior visible body, made up of good and bad men, yet would it not in the least follow from thence, that men were not under an obligation to examin the decisions of Assemblies. For, not to urge, that our Faith depends upon God and his Oracles immediately, and not upon any human Authority whatever, according to that of St. *Paul*, *That faith cometh by hearing, and that by the word of God:* M. de *Meaux* knows well enough that very many eminent Doctors of his Communion are of an opinion directly contrary to his pretended conclusion. They tell us, it is very possible for the greatest part of this exterior body, which goes by the name of the Visible Church, to fall into Errors contrary to the true Faith. That this may happen, not only in respect of the People, or Laity, but even to the Prelates, the Cardinals, and the very Pope himself; so that the greater number of those that make up the Assemblies, and who are the Masters of their Decisions, may become Hereticks. They affirm withal, that notwithstanding all this, the Church still continues to be preserved in those few who keep the true Faith, and that in these few, Jesus Christ's Promises shall be fulfilled, for that these alone, in such a case, compose the True Church of our Saviour. Now who does not perceive the Consequence

Rom. 10.

ſequence of this to be, that the deciſions of ſuch Aſſemblies ought to be examined, becauſe the Aſſemblies may become heretical ones, which is expreſly contrary to what M. *de Meaux* pretends?

However, to avoid burdening this diſpute with over many queſtions, I thought it was enough to deny M. *de Meaux* his Principle, and to confront it with another of mine; from which I infer a quite contrary Concluſion, without inſiſting upon the proof of his Conſequence. My Principle is, that in this exterior or viſible Society, *which makes profeſſion to believe in Jeſus Chriſt, and govern it ſelf by his word*, and is compoſed of good and bad men, the good men, and true Believers only are to be look'd upon as Jeſus Chriſt's true Church, to which he made all his Promiſes; and that the wicked and worldly men, who are prevailed upon to make this profeſſion, only by temporal ends and advantages, being no members nor parts of this true Church, have not any right or part in Jeſus Chriſt's Promiſes. From this Principle I inferred, that ſince this mixture of good and bad was not in the common people, or Laity only, but alſo in the body of Paſtors, of whom the Aſſemblies are compoſed, it might happen, that the deciſions, which are always carried by the moſt voices, ſhall be, not the deciſions of the true Church, but of worldly men and hypocrites; ſo that no man can be informed of this ſufficiently, for the ſafety of his Conſcience, any other way, than by examining the deciſions themſelves; and therefore each particular perſon is both priviledged and obliged to examin them, that he may not hazard his Salvation upon bare preſumptions, which, before examination, have no other ground to go upon, than the majority of voices, and conſequently muſt needs be very uncertain.

Theſe are our two ſeveral Hypotheſes. M. *de Meaux* is for our receiving the deciſions of Aſſemblies without examining them at all, becauſe, ſays he, they are the deciſions of the true Church; and I am of opinion, they ought to be examined, to know, whether they be in truth the deciſions of the true Church or no. From whence it is plain, that the principal point we ought to begin with, is that queſtion, What is the juſt notion of the True Church of Chriſt? that is, whether it conſiſts of all thoſe, whom outward profeſſion hath gathered together into one and the ſame exterior Society, good and bad men indifferently, as M. *de Meaux* thinks? or whether it do not conſiſt of the true Believers and Them only, as I aſſert?

Upon this Conſideration it is, that M. *de Meaux*, in the very beginning of the Inſtructions he gave *Mademoiſelle de Duras*, endeavoured firſt to poſſeſs the mind of his new Proſelyte, with an Idea of the Church, agreeable to his pretenſions. *All Chriſtians*, ſaid he to her, *by the name*

Meaux's Eng Conf. p. 2. Pag. 3. *of the Church, underſtand a Society, making profeſſion to believe the Doctrine of Jeſus Chriſt, and govern it ſelf by his Word.* He likewiſe aſſured her, *That this was the proper and genuine ſignification of the word* Church, *ſuch as was known by every one, and uſed in common diſcourſe.* He likewiſe endeavoured to prove this to her, by our acceptation of it, in our Liturgies and Confeſſion of Faith, as well as the uſe of it in Scripture. And at length he concluded, that it was to this Church, that Jeſus Chriſt's Promiſes did belong, and that a full and entire ſubmiſſion was owing to what ſhould be decreed in her Aſſemblies.

This notion of the Church it was, that I oppoſed in the ſecond Enquiry of my Anſwer to his Diſcourſe, where, as hath been already ſeen, I eſtabliſhed two points, and as I thought, by Arguments concluſive enough. The one, that true Faith, true Piety, and true Regeneration, do eſſentially belong to the Church, and muſt of neceſſity be taken into the definition of the Church. The other, that wicked men and hypocrites, tho they make never ſo much profeſſion to believe in Jeſus Chriſt, and govern themſelves by his word, cannot be admitted into this definition. My preſent buſineſs is to examine, what M. *de Meaux* hath offered to the contrary, in his Ninth Reflection.

His whole diſcourſe may be reduced to three particulars. He accuſes me for having miſunderſtood *Bellarmin*'s and *Perron*'s opinions concerning the Church, when I taxed them with making ſuch a Church, as that there was no inward virtue neceſſarily required to conſtitute it, but only the outward profeſſion of the Faith, and participation of the Sacraments. *One may believe*, ſays he, *by his manner of judging my Sentiments, that he no better underſtood thoſe of theſe illuſtrious Cardinal.* He likewiſe taxes me with miſapprehending his own opinions about this matter, and impoſing upon him, as I had done upon *Bellarmin* and *du Perron*. And laſtly, he explains to us his own true ſenſe of the thing, and aſſures us, that according to him, *the Elect are the moſt eſſential part and ſtrength of the Church*; although it contain alſo beſides theſe Elect, *Dead, and Rotten Members*, which are the wicked men, and hypocrites in it. Theſe three things I will examin in order.

Eng. Reflect. p. 95.

Eng Reflect. p. 93. Page 94.

As to the firſt, whether I have underſtood the Opinions of Cardinal *Bellarmin*, and *du Perron* rightly, or no, when I ſay, They make a Church, whoſe whole Eſſence conſiſts in mere outſides and appearances, was a matter of Fact, which M. *de Meaux* might with great eaſe have made appear, by the very Paſſages of the Authors themſelves; and I do not queſtion, but if he had given himſelf the trouble to conſult theſe before he wrote his Reflection, he would have ſpoken a little leſs confidently in the buſineſs. Obſerve how Card. *Bellarmin* explains himſelf upon

upon this Subject, in a Chapter entituled, *Concerning the Definition of the Church.* ‖ *It is our Opinion,* (says he) *that there are not two Churches, but one only, and that this one and true Church, is a Company of Men linked together by the Profession of one and the same Christian Faith, and by Communicating in the same Sacraments, under the Government of their Lawful Pastors, and especially the Pope of* Rome, *Jesus Christ's only Vicar upon Earth.*

‖ Nostra autem sententia est, Ecclesiam unam tantum esse, non duas, & illam unam, & veram esse cœtum hominum, ejusdem Christianæ fidei professione, & eorundem Sacramentorum communione colligatum, sub regimine legitimorum pastorum, ac præcipue unius Christi in terris Vicarii, Romani Pontificis. *Bellarmin. de Eccles. Lib.* 3. *Cap.* 2.

This Definition does not seem to make very much for M. *de Meaux.* One Assembly of Men, one Profession of the Christian Faith, one Communion in the same Sacraments, one Submission to the Pope of *Rome*; what is there in all this, that is not exterior? But mark what follows. ∴ *By this Definition*, says this Cardinal further, *it is easy to know, who they are that belong to the Church, and who do not belong to it. For this Definition hath three parts, the Profession of the true Faith, the Communion of the Sacraments, and Subjection to the Pope of* Rome, *as the Lawful Pastor. The first of these excludes all the Infidels, both those who never were of the Church, as* Jews, Turks, *and* Pagans; *and also those who have been of it, and are gone out from it, as the Hereticks and Apostates. The second excludes the* Catechumens, *and excommunicated Persons; for the first of these are not yet admitted to Communion in the Sacraments, and the others are driven away from them. The third excludes Schismaticks, who have the Faith, and the Sacraments, but do not live in Submission to their Lawful Pastor; so that they make Profession of the Faith, and receive the Sacraments without the Church. All other sorts of Persons whatever are contained in this Definition, altho they be Reprobates, Profligate, and wicked Men.*

∴ Ex quâ definitione facile colligi potest, qui homines ad Ecclesiam pertineant, qui vero ad eam non pertineant. Tres enim sunt partes hujus Definitionis. Professio veræ fidei, Sacramentorum communio, & subjectio ad legitimum Pastorem, Romanum Pontificem. Ratione primæ partis, excluduntur omnes Infideles, tam qui nunquam fuerunt in Ecclesia, ut Judæi, Turcæ, Pagani; tam qui fuerunt, & recesserunt, ut Hæretici, & Apostatæ. Ratione secundæ, excluduntur Catechumeni, & Excommunicati, quoniam illi non sunt admissi ad Sacramentorum Communionem, isti sunt abmissi. Ratione tertiæ excluduntur Schismatici, qui habent fidem & Sacramenta, sed non subduntur legitimo Pastori, & ideo foris profitentur fidem, & Sacramenta percipiunt. Includuntur autem omnes alii, [etiamsi reprobi, scelesti & impii sint. *Bellarm. Ibid.*

These terms are clear and decisive. The Essence and Nature of the Church does not according to this Definition, exclude the Elect; but so neither does it exclude the Reprobates out of it, it does not quite cast off the Righteous; but so neither does it reject the Wicked and Profligate: It bears with the true Faith, and it also bears and can be reconciled

reconciled with Ungodlineſs; that is to ſay in ſhort, That, according to Cardinal *Bellarmin*'s Notion, the Elect and Righteous are not one jot more eſſential to the Church, than the Wicked and Reprobates. But let us proceed a little further yet, † *There is*, ſaith he, *this difference between our Opinions, and that of all other People, that all beſides us require internal Graces and Virtues, as neceſſary to make any man a member of the true Church; and for this Reaſon, they make the true Church Inviſible; but we for our part, altho we believe that all Virtues, Faith, Hope, Charity, and the reſt, are to be found in the Church; yet we do not think that any inward Virtue is neceſſarily required, but only an outward profeſſion of the Faith, and communicating in the Sacraments; ſuch as falls under the Cognizance of our Senſes, and that this ſuffices to give a man the real Demonſtration of a part or member of that true Church, ſpoken of in Scripture. For the Church is an Aſſembly of Men, as viſible and palpable, as the Company of the People of* Rome, *or the Kingdom of* France, *or the Republick of* Venice.

† Atque hoc intereſt inter ſententiam noſtram, & alias omnes, quòd omnes aliæ requirent intemas virtutes ad conſtituendum aliquem in Eccleſiâ, & propterea Eccleſiam veram inviſibilem faciunt; nos autem & credimus in Eccleſia invenini omnes virtutes. Fidem, ſpem cantatem, & cæteras, tamen, ut aliquis aliquo modo dici poſſit pars veræ Eccleſiæ, de qua Scripturæ loquuntur, non putamus requiri ullam internam virtutem, ſed tantum externam Profeſſionem fidei, & Sacramentorum Communionem, quæ ſenſu ipſo percipitur. Eccleſia enim eſt cætus hominum ita viſibilis, & palpabilis, ut eſt cætus populi Romani, vel Regnum Gallicæ, aut res publica venetorum. Ibid.

Hitherto he gives a Definition of the Church very expreſs, well conſidered, and particularly explained, into which he does not take, either the true Believers, or righteous Perſons, or the Preſtetſtinated; and being all the World knows, that men in giving a Definition, make it their buſineſs to compriſe the whole Eſſence of the thing defined in few Words; it would be hard not to conclude from this of *Bellarmin*'s, that he did not look upon the true Believers, nor the Predeſtinate, as any way eſſential to the Church, for this very reaſon, that he never mentions them at all in his Definition of it. The truth is, if the true Believers and Predeſtinate, be really eſſential to the Church, they muſt needs be ſo, either in regard of the matter, that is, the Perſons whereof the Church muſt of neceſſity be compoſed; or in regard of the form, that is, the common band that joyns them together, and makes them to be the Church. Now, as for the matter of the Church, he makes this conſiſt purely in Men, without any particular notice taken of Predeſtination, or true Faith. *It is*, ſays he, *a Company of Men, Cætus hominum.* And for the form, he does not only place it in things which are all of them external, as Profeſſion of the Chriſtian Faith, Communion of the Sacraments, and Submiſſion of the Pope of *Rome*; but he goes further,

and

and positively excludes internal Virtues, as things not at all necessary, *Non putamus requiri ullam internam Virtutum; We do not think that any inward Virtue is necessarily required.* And thus it is, that he includes within the Church, the Reprobate, the Profligate, and Ungodly Men, as parts of it, *Includuntur omnes alii, etiamsi reprobi, scelesti & impis sint.*

As for Cardinal *du Perron*, We find in his Reply to the King of *Great Britain*, one particular Chapter, the Title whereof, is, *Of the Definition of the Church, and in what Union it consists.* In the beginning of it, he makes a long Preamble after his way, that is, a very Emphatical one upon Definitions in general; where among other things he says, * *That a Definition is an Epitome and Abridgment of the full knowledg of any thing which is reduced, or contracted from the most extensive Consideration of the Effects and Accidents that attend it, to that which is precisely Essential to it. So that, just as in the Distribution of Numbers, which Philosophers propound to us for Types and Patterns of essential Forms; every Addition or Substraction, tho it be never so small, alters the Essence and Character, and destroys the exact Species of that Number; In like manner, in the just turn of Words, and the due compass of Language, by which, as by an Horizon, the Essence of each particular thing should be bounded, every Addition or Omission of Words, ruins and destroys the Definition.* Afterwards, he blames the Protestants for giving sometimes too straight and narrow a Definition of the Church, in confining it to the Predestinated only; and sometimes too loose and general a one, in calling it, The Number of those that live in a Profession of serving God by Jesus Christ. At length, when he hath been at the pains to give his Readers this Preparation, and raised in them some hopes of receiving this exact and perfect Definition of the Church, which shall contain its whole Essence, and yet contain nothing but that; pray observe how he explains himself. ‖ *In the first place,* says he, *we will demonstrate, that the Unity which constitutes the formal Essence of the*

* *In this Chapter, the Cardinal after an elegant Comparison betwixt a* Halcoyn's *Nest, and a Definition, hath these words,* La Definition est un Epitome, & un abrege de l' entiere Connoistance de chaque chose, laquelle se reduit, & raccourcit de la consideration plus ample des effets, & des accidens, qui l' accompaynent, á ce qui est precisement de son Essence. De sonte que tout ainsy, qu' en la Distribution des nombres, ques les Philosophes prepose pour types & Patrons des formes Essentielles, toute Addition, ou sousstraction, quelque petite qu'elle soit, varie l' etre, & le caractere, & detruit, l' espece precise du nombre: Ainsi au juste tour des paroles & á la legitime circonference du langage, dont l' Essence de chaque chose doit etre bornee, comme d'un horison, toute Addition, ou Obmission de mots mine, & detruit la Definition. Republique Au Roy de Grand Bretagne. *Lib.* 1. *Cap.* 8. *Pag.* 33. *Edit. Paris,* 1620.

‖ *Afterwards, having in his old Rhetorical way, compared these two Definitions, to the two Holes or Burrows of a* Foxes *Kennel, which must both be set with Nets, if you would be sure to catch the* Fox; *he makes the following Promise to answer both Definitions; lest, while he stops one hole, the Hereticks should escape at the other.* En premier lien, nous montrerons, que

Church,

l' unite, qui conſtitue l' etre formel de l' Egliſe, eſt celle de la Vocation extreme, & non celle de la Predeſtination, nide la foyinterne, ni de la Conjunction des Eſprits par les Offices de la Charite, & des prieres mutuelles, ni de la Participation d' une me ſine eſperance.——— Secondement, nous ferons voir, que cette Vocation en l' unite de laquelle conſiſte, la forme eſſentielle de l' Egliſe, n' eſt pas la ſimple profeſſion du nom de Chriſt, mais eſt la Vocation, (ſavoir exterieure) á ſalut, par les moyens juſtes & ſuffiſans. qui ſont la profeſſion de la iraye foy, ſincere Adminiſtration des Sacramens, & adherence avæ Paſteurs legitimes. Or de cette Definition la premiere partie, á ſavoir, que la forme de l' Egliſe conſiſte en l' unite de la Vocation extreme, & non en l' unite d' aucune condition inviſible, nous la traiterons dans l' examen des trois Articles ſuivans, ou ſa Majeſte propoſe les Unions internes, es quelles elle pretend, que l' eſſence de l' Egliſe puiſſe etre conſervee. *Ibid. Pag.* 34, 36.

Church, is that of external Vocation, and not that of Predeſtination, nor inward Faith, nor the Conjunction of Souls by charitable Offices, and mutual Prayers, nor Participation of the ſame Hope. Obſerve, how mighty careful this great Doctor is before hand, to caſt off all inward Virtues from the formal Eſſence of the Church. *Secondly*, proceeds he, *We will make it appear, that this Vocation in the Unity whereof the Churches formal Eſſence conſiſts, is not barely profeſſing the name of Chriſt, but a Vocation (an outward one I mean) to Salvation, by proper and ſufficient means, ſuch as are the Profeſſion of the true Faith, ſincere Adminiſtration of the Sacraments, and adhering to lawful Paſtors; ſo that the Definition of the Church will be the Society of thoſe, whom God hath called to Salvation, by the Profeſſion of the true Faith, ſincere Adminiſtration of the Sacraments, and adhering to lawful Paſtors. Now the firſt part of this Definition, to wit, that the form of the Church conſiſts in the Unity of the external Vocation, and not in the Unity of the inviſible Condition, we ſhall treat of in the Examination of the three following Articles, wherein His Majeſty lays down the internal Unions, in which he pretends the Eſſence of the Church may be preſerved.*

I think I have now produced another very punctual definition of the Church; a definition, that takes no notice of the predeſtinate or righteous for any part of the matter whereof the Church is eſſentially and neceſſarily compoſed; but only of men externally called, *The Society of thoſe, whom God hath called to Salvation by the profeſſion*, &c. A definition, that lays down nothing elſe for the eſſential form of the Church, but a bare profeſſion, *The profeſſion of the true Faith, ſincere Adminiſtration*, &c. A definition, which, according to its own Author's explanation, does really exclude Predeſtination, Inward Faith, Charity, and Hope, from the Eſſential form of the Church. A definition, conſequently, which admits wicked men, profligate, and ungodly wretches, to be parts or members of the true Church, provided they do but continue in the unity of Profeſſion, exactly, as *Bellarmin*'s definition mentioned before did.

M. *de*

M. *de Meaux* now must give me leave to ask him the question, whether I understood the Sentiments of these two Cardinals aright, or not? I do not say they have made a Church, to which it shall be necessary and essential to be composed of hypocrites and wicked men: But I charge them with having made a Church, to which it is not necessary and essential to be composed of good men. I do not accuse them of having banished inward virtues utterly out of the Church; but I find fault with their not allowing those virtues a place in the formal Essence and definition of the Church. I do not say, they have actually composed the whole Church of wicked men and hypocrites; but I say, they have defined it after such an odd fashion, that it would lose nothing of its Nature and Essence, tho it were composed of such men entirely. Upon this consideration it was, I said, *That the Debate between us was, whether the Nature and Essence of the Church consisted altogether in mere outsides and appearances, or whether it did not besides, require something of Reality; whether hypocrisy, and a lying, deceitful, superficial holiness were sufficient? to confer upon men the right of belonging to, and being members of the Church? or whether something of Truth ought not to be had in order to it? whether wicked men, worldlings and reprobates, provided only they made profession, and could counterfeit with dexterity, were in truth parts of Jesus Christ's mystical Body? or whether such a glorious priviledge belonged to true Believers only?* Upon the same account I said, *That Faith and effectual Holiness were of the Essence and Nature of the Church, and not a mere profession only; That the Church must not be defined by a bare outward profession, but that true Faith and Regeneration must be taken into the Idea we form of it; That if the Unity, which constitutes the Church here upon Earth were no more than an Unity of profession, an external unity, and the internal one were accidental only, the unity of that in Heaven would be but external neither, and the internal one no more essential to that than the other; or, if it were otherwise, then there will be two different Churches.* Lastly, for the same Reason, I said, *That the two Cardinals,* Bellarmin, *and* du Perron, *made such a Church, as did not, in its Constitution, require any thing of inward virtue, but merely the outward profession of the Faith, and Communion in the Sacraments; a Church, whose unity, which constitutes its formal essence, is an unity of external vocation, and not either of Predestination, nor of inward Faith, nor of Conjunction of Souls by mutual offices of Charity; a Church, that is defined, not by believing and governing it self by God's Word; but by making profession to believe and govern it self by that Word: A Church, lastly, whose Essence would remain perfect and entire, tho there were neither any real believers, nor just persons in it; and which would still continue to be Jesus Christ's true Church, tho it were composed of hypocrites, and none else.*

M. de Meaux then muſt give me leave to ask him once more, wherein I miſunderſtood *the Sentiments of his illuſtrious Cardinals?* Does he mean, that defining the Church by outward profeſſion only, that the not admitting inward virtues to be any part either of the matter or form of it, that the placing its formal unity in the external vocation, that declaring the thing which conſtitutes the Church is not any internal unity; does he mean, I ſay, that all this is not making the nature of it to conſiſt in mere outſides, to reduce its eſſence to a bare profeſſion, and allow it an inward unity only by accident? Or is not the plain Conſequence of this, the making a Church, whoſe Eſſence would remain entire, tho there were not any true believers, or righteous perſons in it; and would it not, tho compoſed of hypocrites, and none elſe, ſtill continue to be the true Church of Jeſus Chriſt, ſince even thus it would ſtill be a ſociety of men, united by the profeſſion of the ſame Chriſtian Faith, and by the Communion of the ſame Sacraments?

It is a thing ſo generally held among the moſt common Writers of Controverſy in the Church of *Rome*, that the Church conſiſts of nothing that is internal; that M. *Malet*, one of our modern Authors, and ſince his death, famous for ſeveral Anſwers to his Writings, having found in a Note of the *Mons* Teſtament, this paſſage, *That Faith, Hope, and Charity are neceſſary for every Chriſtian, and eſſential to the Church*, hath called this no better than an erroneous and ſeditious Doctrine. *If Charity*, ſays he, *be eſſential to the Church, the ſinner, who hath loſt Charity will be conſequently cut off from it, and the Church will be no more than the company of the Saints, which is the Error of the* Pelagians, *and modern Hereticks. And further, ſuppoſing a ſinner to be no longer a member of the Church, the Popes, Biſhops, and Prieſts, who continue in this ſtate of ſin, will loſe all their right of governing the people, becauſe not being any longer of the Church, they are not any longer Governors of it. Obſerve*, proceeds he, *how far this Annotation inſerted by the Tranſlators of* Mons, *unneceſſarily, and of their own heads, will extend, which inſinuates into the Reader this ſeditious Doctrine.*

Continuat. de la Nouvelle Defenſe, l. 11. ch. 6.

But it is alſo as generally taken for granted, that from hence it neceſſarily follows, the Church may be conceived as conſiſting of hypocrites, wicked men, and none others; and this Conſequence M. *de Malet*'s Anſwerer hath taken care to infer as well as I. *If*, ſays he, *theſe virtues were not eſſential to the body of the Church, then the body of the Church might be conceived to remain entire, without Faith, Hope, and Charity: That is, A Man might ſuppoſe the true Church of Chriſt ſtill in the World, and that the Gates of Hell had not prevailed againſt her, tho ſhe were no more but merely a company of hypocrites, who while they make profeſſion of the true Faith, have no ſuch thing in their hearts; or ſuch as had all of them driven away the Holy Spirit*

Spirit from their Souls by a mortal ſin; and an utter extinguiſhing all Charity. And can a greater injury be done to the Son of God, than to be of opinion, that ſuch a company of people are ſtill his Church? This is exactly the ſame thing I ſaid, that it would be to make a Church, whoſe Eſſence might ſtill be perfect and entire, tho there were no true Believers, nor Righteous perſons in it; and that tho it were made up of Hypocrites, and none elſe, yet it would continue Jeſus Chriſt's true Church. And yet ſure it cannot be ſuſpected there was any conferring of Notes, or ſecret Correſpondence betwixt this Author and me.

But to return to *Bellarmin*; It is to no purpoſe to excuſe this Cardinal, by ſaying with the Author of that Anſwer to M. *Malet*, that *Bellarmin* acknowledges in the Tenth Chapter of his third Book concerning the Church, * *That we have the aſſurance of a Divine Faith, that there are in the Church many perſons who are really pious, true believers and predeſtinated, and that although there be in a Man's body Nails and Hair that have no life, it muſt not be concluded from thence, that the Body of a Man is nothing elſe but Nails and Hair.* For this Diſcourſe of *Bellarmin* may very well mean, that we are aſſured ſome other way God calls his predeſtinated Children in the Church, to be True Believers in it, and the Eſſence of the Church is not at all repugnant to this; but it can never mean, that the True Believers, and predeſtinated perſons are of the Eſſence of the Church, or at all Eſſential to the Church; as for inſtance, I may be very particularly aſſured there are Philoſophers in the Kingdom, but the meaning of this is not, that thoſe Philoſophers are of the Kingdoms Eſſence, or any manner of way eſſential to it, becauſe I may be aſſured of this ſome other way. And as for that Compariſon of a Man's Body, ſhould I define the Body of a Man ſo, as that my whole definition might very well agree with Nails and Hair, as his does agree perfectly with a company of Hypocrites; it is very certain, a Man might reaſonably ſay, that, according to me, the living members would not be of the eſſence of the Body, and that the eſſence of the Body might continue perfect, tho it were compoſed of nothing elſe but Nails and Hair.

* Certi ſumus certitudine fidei divinæ, in eâdem Eccleſiâ multos eſſe verè fideles, pios & electos, quemadmodum etiam in corpore humano inveniuntur & ungues, & capilli, qui non vivunt, & nemo ramen inde colligit, corpus humanum nihil eſſe, niſi ungues & capillos. *Bellarm.* de Eccleſ. Lib. 3. Cap. 10. ſub finem Capitis.

It is further ſo evident, that, in this Cardinal's opinion, the True Believers are not of the Eſſence of the Church, that in the very ſame Book, Anſwering an Objection taken from the Title of *Holy*, being given to the Church, he makes a formal diſtinction between all thoſe things that conſtitute the Church, and its prerogative of having True

Believers within it: * *The Church*, says he, *is called, and really is Holy, because all the things requisite to the constituting her, that is, to her Essence, are Holy. Now three things are requisite to the constituting of the Church: First, Baptism, which no body can deny to be Holy; Secondly, The Christian Profession, that is, the profession of Faith and good Manners, or if you please, of the Doctrines and Precepts of Christianity; and it is certain too, that this Profession is Holy, and that no other is so besides it. For that of* Jews, Turks, *Pagans, and Hereticks is not Holy, but that of Christians only. In the third place, the union of the Members with one another, and with the Head, at least an external one, and in things pertaining to Religion, which union is likewise holy without all dispute.* Here is all that he esteems essential to the Church. Afterwards he subjoyns, *The Church is called Holy too, by reason of the Holy persons in her.* So that to have Holy persons in her, is not in his opinion any thing that belongs to the Essence and Constitution of the Church.

* Respondeo, Ecclesiam dici, & verè esse sanctam, quia omnia quæ ad ipsam constituendam pertinent, sunt sancta. Primò Baptisma, quod sanctum esse nemo negare potest. Secundò Professio Christiana, id est, fidei, morum, sive dogmatum, & præceptorum Christianorum, quam professionem sanctam esse, & solam ipsam esse sanctam, certissimum est. Nec enim Judæorum, Turcarum, Ethnicorum, Hæreticorum professio sancta est, sed solum professio Christianorum. Tertiò unio membrorum inter se, & cum capite, saltem externa & quoad ea, quæ ad religionem pertinent, quæ unio etiam sine dubio est sancta. ——— Dicitur etiam sancta propter sanctos, quos habet. *Bellarm.* Lib. 1. de Ecclesiâ Cap. 9.

I hope now, M. *de Meaux* will be so just, as not to tax me any more, with misunderstanding *Bellarmin*'s and *du Perron*'s Sentiments. But I hope withal, he will do me the same justice in not retracting what he hath said, *That this is indeed a frightful Idea of the Church, and that he does not wonder that Mr.* Claude *has an horror of it*; for it is in truth a frightful one, and 'tis scarce possible for a Man to form one more so: But still it is the Idea, which his Illustrious Cardinals had, and, which is more, 'tis that which they give us, not as a thing peculiar to themselves in particular, but as the common opinion of their Catholicks, and set in opposition to the Protestants Tenet, as is evident, if men will but take the pains to read their Chapters. So that, if M. *de Meaux* persevere in maintaining *this Idea to be as far from the mind of all Catholicks, as Heaven is from Hell*; he must place all *Bellarmin*'s and *Perron*'s Catholicks in Hell, and reduce his own to a very inconsiderable number, if he will lodge them in Paradise.

Engl. Refl. p. 92.

Ibid.

But it is time now to come to M. *de Meaux* himself; and, because he must be considered with respect to two several times, either that, when he gave the Instructions to *Mademoiselle de Duras*, or that, when he wrote his Reflections, I will begin with the former of these, and make that

that the ſecond Particular of this Examination. *I know not*, ſays he, *how Mr.* Claude *could read my Inſtructions, without ſeeing in them the clean contrary to what he impoſes on me.* And, as for my part, I ſhall take the freedom to ſay, That I know not how I could have read them without diſcovering all that I have charged him with. I obſerve, that he follows the very ſteps of *Bellarmin* and *du Perron* in them, that here preſents the true Church there, *to be a Society making Profeſſion to believe in Jeſus Chriſt, and govern it ſelf by his Word*; that he does not by an Addition of his own, take notice of inward Virtues as neceſſary at all; that he avers all Chriſtians underſtand the ſame thing that he does, by the word *Church*; that he puts a plain Diſtinction between his Church, and that of the Predeſtinate and Elect; in a word, that he will have it compoſed of wicked Men and Hypocrites, as well as good and righteous Perſons. Look upon M. *de Meaux* thus far, and what other can you think of his Opinion, but that it treads exactly in the ſteps of his Predeceſſors; my meaning is, that he does not believe inward Virtues to be at all eſſential to the Church, nor that it is compoſed of true Believers only? Eng. Refl. pag. 92.

But, ſays he, *You will there find alſo, that the Elect, and the Saints, are the moſt noble part of it, that they are there ſanctified, that they are there regenerated, often alſo by the Miniſtry of the Reprobate; that they muſt n t be conſidered, as making a Body a part; but as making the faireſt, and moſt noble part of it. You will there find, That the Doctrine of the Church continually brings forth Saints in her Unity; and that by this Doctrine, She inſtructs, and contains in her Boſom the Elect of God. You will find there, That if Hell cannot prevail againſt the viſible and exterior Society of the Church; it is becauſe it cannot prevail againſt the Elect, who are the pureſt, and moſt ſpiritual part of this Church. You will find there, That the effect of the Miniſtery is to bring the Children of God to the perfect Stature of Jeſus Chriſt, that is, to Perfection; which, after it hath rendred them holy, will render them glorious, both in Body and Soul. You will find there, The exterior and interior Communion of the Faithful with Jeſus Chriſt, and of the Faithful among themſelves; the interior Communion by Charity, and in the Holy Ghoſt, who animates us; but at the ſame time the exterior Communion in the Sacraments, in the Confeſſion of Faith, and in all the exterior Miniſtry of the Church.* Eng. Refl. pag. 92. Pag. 93. Ibid. Ibid. Ibid.

I acknowledg all this may be found ſcattered here and there, in M. *de Meaux* Writings; but ſtill nothing of all this does import, that the inward Virtues are of the Eſſence of the Church, or that they ought to be taken into the Definition of it, or that it is compoſed of true Believers only, which is the matter we now contend about. This indeed does evidently infer, that he does not exclude the Elect and true Believers, but

but allows them a Room in the Boſom of the Church, and ſo he does not make it to conſiſt entirely of Hypocrites and wicked Men. I grant it. *Bellarmin* and *du Perron*, ſay as much as this comes to. But this is no Argument, that it is eſſential to the Church to be compoſed of true Believers and the Elect. This is the very knot of the Queſtion, and we muſt not go about to perplex our ſelves with Equivocations. There is a vaſt difference betwixt affirming, that there are Elect, and righteous Perſons within the Church; and aſſerting, that true Faith, and true Righteouſneſs, are of the Eſſence of the Church, or that the Elect and juſt Perſons are eſſential to it. The former of theſe, M. *de Meaux* hath ſaid in his Inſtruction, I agree he has, nor did I ever tax him with any thing to the contrary. But that he ſaid the ſecond, I utterly deny, and am ready to prove, that his whole Diſcourſe to *Mademoiſelle de Duras*, does naturally repreſent the Speaker to be a Perſon of *Bellarmin*'s and *du Perron*'s Opinion, That inward Virtues are not in the leaſt of the Churches Eſſence; and conſequently, that the Elect and the Juſt were not eſſential to it neither.

To evidence this, We need only conſider the Notion he hath given us of the Church, to wit, That it *is a Society making Profeſſion to believe in Jeſus Chriſt, and govern it ſelf by his Word*; for, if he had deſigned we ſhould apprehend the Elect and the Righteous to be of the Eſſence of the Church, he would not have forgot to mention them. He would have ſaid, It is a Society of elect or righteous Perſons, making Profeſſion to believe in Jeſus Chriſt, and govern themſelves by his word; or, if you pleaſe, a mixed Society of elect and reprobate, righteous and unrighteous Perſons making this Profeſſion. *But*, ſays he, *there was not any need, as Mr.* Claude *ſuppoſes, to give a perfect Definition of the Church, nor to prove her interior Union by the Holy Ghoſt, by Faith, by Charity.* If, when M. *de Meaux* ſaid, *That Chriſtians underſtood no more by the word Church, than a Society making Profeſſion to believe the Doctrine of Jeſus Chriſt, and govern it ſelf by his Word*; It was not his Intention to give a Definition of it; yet, however he hath given one very agreeable to that of *Bellarmin* and *du Perron*, as every one may plainly ſee by comparing them together; ſo that he gave very juſt occaſion to believe, that was his Intention. And his own acknowledgment, that he deſigned hereby to ſhew the Churches Viſibility, is a further Confirmation of this very thing; for both *Bellarmin* and *du Perron* expreſly declare, That they give their Definitions on purpoſe to avoid making the Church Inviſible. So that in regard they all make uſe of the ſame Notions, and have all done it with a tendency to the ſame end, it would have been mighty hard for me, to gueſs at this difference in their Intentions. When we ſee

Eng. Refl. pag. 92.

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men all carrying on the ſame deſign, and carrying it on in the very ſame methods too; it is very uſual with us, to conclude their Intentions are the ſame alſo.

But, not to diſpute of Intentions already paſt and private; I wiſh M. *de Meaux* would tell us his Opinion of *Bellarmin*'s and *du Perron*'s Definitions of the Church, and whether he accept or reject them. If he accept them, 'tis to no purpoſe to ſay, he did not intend to define the Church; ſince, what he hath ſaid, agrees exactly with theſe Cardinals Definitions. And if he reject them, he ought not to have ſaid as he hath done, *That one may believe by Mr.* Claude's *manner of judging his Sentiments, that he no better underſtood thoſe of thoſe Illuſtrious Cardinals*, becauſe their Sentiments being different from his, there can be no Conſequence from the one to the other. Let him therefore tell us plainly, whether he be of *Bellarmin*'s and *Perron*'s Opinion, or not; becauſe, if he be, he Eſpouſes their Definitions, and gives me juſt occaſion to believe, that in ſpeaking as they did, he likewiſe had an Intention to define the Church as they had done; and if he be not, there was no reaſon for his making theirs and his own to be the ſame cauſe, nor to interweave his intereſt and concern with theirs. Pag. 95.

I am ſo far from picking Quarrels upon mere terms, That if M. *de Meaux* deſire it, I am ready to call what he ſaid of the Church, not a *Definition*, but an Idea, a Deſcription, a Notion, or any thing, what he will, provided I may likewiſe have leave to tell him, that if there were no need of delivering it perfect in every particular, there was need at leaſt not to deliver it ſo liable to Exception, conſidering the uſe he pretended to make of it. Now ſuch, I aver it to be, becauſe it takes away the opportunities of diſcuſſing a Queſtion, which might determine the main difference, which is really a captious way of proceeding. The main Controverſy is, whether the Deciſions of Aſſemblies ought to be examined, or received without any Examination at all. It is our Opinion, that the Queſtion, upon which the Deciſion of that chiefly depends, is, whether the true Church conſiſts of true Believers only? and yet this is exactly the Queſtion, which M. *de Meaux* deprives his Proſelyte of all opportunity of diſcuſſing, when he tells her at the very firſt, *That all that Chriſtians underſtand by the word* Church, *is a Society making Profeſſion to believe in Jeſus Chriſt, and govern it ſelf by his Word*; and afterwards he leads her out to take a proſpect of its Viſibility. There was no need therefore for M. *de Meaux* to ſay juſt now, That he did not make it his buſineſs to give a perfect Definition, for it was really his proper buſineſs, not only to lay down one, but alſo to do it in the Eng. Conf. page 3.

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very beginning of his Inſtruction, becauſe no man ought to be impoſed upon.

We are agreed, ſays M. *de Meaux*, *of the Churches interior Union by the Holy Ghoſt, by Faith, and by Charity.* If we are agreed upon it, then he ought to reſtrain the Notion of the Church, to true Believers only, and perfectly exclude Worldly Men and Hypocrites, as the Proteſtants do, out of their Notion. But if M. *de Meaux* had done ſo, the main difference had been removed at the very entrance upon this Diſpute. For if the Church do not conſiſt of true Believers only, the Aſſemblies in which theſe Deciſions paſs, being intermixt with abundance of worldly and wicked Men; no body can be ſecure, that theſe wicked Men did not carry the deciſive Voice, any otherwiſe, than as he may receive ſecurity from examining the Deciſions themſelves; ſo that conſequently, men are bound to examine, and this is directly contrary to M. *de Meaux* his pretended Concluſion. But the truth of the matter is, that, whatever he may ſay of the thing, we are not agreed of this interior Union; for he underſtands his interior Union in this Senſe, That in the Compoſition of the true Church, there are ſome true Believers, tho there be at the ſame time Hypocrites and wicked Men beſides theſe; whereas we underſtand it in this other Senſe, That in the Compoſition of the true Church, there are true Believers, excluding at the ſame time the wicked Perſons and Hypocrites. Thus M. *de Meaux* plays with his Subject. Our Opinions in this caſe have a real and very material difference between one another; ſo that, if we would take the right courſe, his Inſtruction ought to have begun there, and not to have concealed from the Conſideration of the Lady he inſtructed, a thing ſo important, and ſo neceſſary to be known, as this was, in order to informing her Judgment aright.

But it may be objected, M. *de Meaux*, however acknowledges now at laſt, that the Elect are eſſential to the Church. It is true, and this part therefore of his ninth Reflection remains to be examined. *We conſider the Elect, as making the moſt eſſential part, and ſtrength of the Church.* He never uſed this Phraſe in his Inſtruction, but now he explains by this what he had ſaid before, That the *Elect are the pureſt and moſt ſpiritual part of the Church.*

Eng. Refl. page 93.

M. *de Meaux* muſt ever have a priviledge of explaining his own words, how he thinks fit; but before we take this Explanation given us here into Conſideration, I muſt intreat him, that he will allow us to offer two things to him. The one is, That if it be reaſonable I ſhould admit his Explanation, it is alſo reaſonable, that this, like all new Lands, ſhould not be of any free, but only from the time of its being notified; and conſequently,

quently, that if I before that time interpreted his Words in (as I thought) the moſt natural ſence, this muſt be eſteemed his fault rather than mine. The ſecond thing is, that let him underſtand his explanation how he will, it can do him very little ſervice, ſo long as this queſtion continues undetermined between us, whether hypocrites and wicked men be Members of the true Church, or not. Tho he had concluded a Thouſand times over, that the Elect are eſſential to the Church, what would this ſignify to our main controverſy, which is, whether the Deciſions of Aſſemblies muſt be examined, or received without any more ado? He ſhould have choſen another way, if he deſigned to advance but one ſtep, to the end he propounds to himſelf. He ſhould prove, that wicked men and hypocrites, who may compoſe Aſſemblies, and form Deciſions, as well as others, let them be as wicked as they will, yet for all that are ſtill of Jeſus Chriſt's true Church; if he would deduce, as he might afterwards have done, his Concluſion from thence. Indeed it hath not only been obſerved, that, according to his principle, all the Eſſence of the Church is made to conſiſt in an Exterior unity; but beſides, which is a thing extremely contrary to the Truth of the Goſpel, it hath been likewiſe obſerved, that the Church is made to conſiſt of good and bad men promiſcuouſly. It was not enough for him therefore to vindicate himſelf, as to the firſt of theſe; he muſt alſo clear himſelf of the ſecond, otherwiſe he deſerts his Principle, and conſequently the main matter of his Diſpute. For tho by this means, he ſhould acquit his Principle of the falſity and odium, (which yet it ſhall by and by be made appear he hath not done) yet there would ſtill be left enough to warrant our rejecting it, and utterly to evacuate whatever inferences he would deduce from thence, till he had eſtabliſht it better. He aſſures us, the Elect are eſſential to the Church. I grant it. But does he prove withal, that wicked men are really parts or members of this Church? Not any thing of it. Does he make it appear, that inward Faith and Regeneration are not neceſſay to qualify a Man for becoming a Member of the True Church? 'Tis a thing he never troubles himſelf about. Or however, does he anſwer the Arguments already produced to prove the contrary? No. Here then is ground enough in all reaſon to ſay, that he does not defend the Hypotheſis of the Church of *Rome*; for that can be defended no other way, but this; that can be made to look plauſible no other way but this.

If M. *de Meaux* will not take my word in the Caſe, let him at leaſt believe his *Illuſtrious* Cardinal *Bellarmin*, who explains his ſenſe of this particular in the following manner, in the Tenth Chapter of his Third

Book concerning the Church. † *If those that are without inward Faith, neither are, nor can be in the Church, our dispute with the Heretick concerning the Churches visibility will fall to the ground: And consequently, which is a thing well worth consideration, the Controversial Writings of so many Learned men will be utterly useless. For all that have written hitherto against the* Lutherans *and* Calvinists, *object against them, that they make the Church invisible. Now, that this dispute must needs fall to the ground, I prove thus: The* Lutherans *and* Calvinists, *fix upon some certain exterior and visible marks of the Church, such as the Preaching of God's Word, and Administration of the Sacraments; and it is their constant Doctrine, that wheresoever these marks are found, there is the true Church of Jesus Christ. But, because they hold, that only the just and good men belong to the true Church, and that no Man can be absolutely certain which are really the just and good, among so many that have only an outward shew of Piety and Justice, it being very sure, that false brethren and hypocrites abound every where, from thence our Writers have with a great deal of reason inferred, that they made a Church that was invisible.*

Moreover, according to the Lutherans *and* Calvinists, *Righteousness consists in Faith alone, and for the Church to be the Company of Righteous and Good men, is the same thing with them, as for it to be the Company of True Believers? And now, who does not plainly perceive, that, exclude out of the Church all that have not true Faith in their hearts, and our opinion is perfectly the same with theirs. Besides, it is necessary, we should have a certain and infallible*

† Deinde, si ii, qui fide interna carent, non sunt, nec esse possunt in Ecclesia; nulla erit inter nos & hæreticos amplius quæstio de Ecclesiæ visibilitate; proinde (quod ego certe magni facio) superva caneæ erunt tot eruditissimorum hominum disputationes, quæ hactenus prodierunt.

Omnes enim, qui hactenus scripserunt, id objiciunt Lutheranis & Calvinistis, quod Ecclesiam invisibilem faciant: Nullam autem futuram amplius quæstionem, ita probo.

Lutherani & *Calvinistæ* signa visibilia quædam, & externa Ecclesiæ statuunt, nimirum prædicationem verbi Dei, & Sacramentorum administrationem; & constanter docent, ubicunq; hæc signa conspiciuntur, ibi esse etiam veram Christi Ecclesiam. Quia tamen solos justos, & pios ad Ecclesiam veram pertinere volunt, & nemo potest certo scire, qui sunt vere justi, & pii, inter tam multos, qui justitiam, & pietatem exterius præ se ferunt, cum certum sit, multos ubiq; esse hypocritas, & falsos fratres: Idcirco nostri recte concludunt, eos facere Ecclesiam invisibilem. Porro, Lutheranis & Calvinistis justitia in sola fide consistit, idemq; est apud eos, Ecclesiam esse cætum justorum, & piorum, & esse cætum vere credentium; quis non igitur videt, nos cum illis plane convenire, si omnes illos ab Ecclesia excludamus, qui veram fidem in corde non habent?

Ad hæc, necesse est, ut nobis certitudine infallibili constet, qui cætus hominum sit vera Christi Ecclesia; nam cum Scripturæ, Traditiones, & omnia plane dogmata ex testimonio Ecclesiæ pendeant, nisi certissimi simus, quæ sit vera Ecclesia, incerta erunt prorsus omnia. At non potest certitudine infallibili nobis constare, quæ sit vera Ecclesia, si fides interna requiritur in quolibet membro, seu parte Ecclesiæ; quis enim certo novit, in quibus sit ista fides? Non igitur fides, aut aliquid aliud invisibile, & occultum requiritur, ut quis aliquo modo pertineat ad Ecclesiam. *Bellarm.* de Eccles. Lib. 3. Cap. 10.

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knowledg what Company of Men are Jesus Christ's true Church, because Scripture, Traditions, and indeed all establisht Doctrines depend upon the Churches Testimony; and supposing us not to be perfectly assured, which is the true Church, every thing will be uncertain. But if inward Faith be necessarily required in every member or part of the Church, we can never attain to a certain and infallible knowledg, which is the true Church; for who can know certainly what particular persons have that true Faith? This Faith therefore is not necessary, nor any thing else that is invisible, and secret, to make a Man any way belong to the Church.

You see now of how mighty a Consequence *Bellarmin* judges it, and how much for the Church of *Romes* advantage, that the True Church should not be composed of true Believers only, but Hypocrites and wicked men be allowed for members of it also. Unless you stick close to this position, and maintain it stifly, you agree with the *Calvinists* in the point of the Churches invisibility; and which is worse, you overthrow her supreme Authority, and make, whatever depends upon her Testimony, which in a word is every thing, to be doubtful and uncertain. What then could be the meaning of M. *de Meaux* to be silent in a Tenet, without the settling of which, all the Decisions and Doctrines of the *Romish* Church are in a desperate condition, and all to trouble his Brain about a thing that can do him no good at all?

Having now offered these two things in the first place, I beg his favour to desire that this new explanation of his may be a little illustrated. For these words, *That the Elect are the most Essential part of the Church*, are capable of a double meaning; the one a literal and philosophical, to denote, that it is really of the Essence of the Church, to be in part composed of the Elect; the other, vulgar and more obvious, to signify plainly, that the Elect are the most worthy, most valuable, and most useful part of the Church. It may very well be said, for instance, in that vulgar sence, that Learned men are the most Essential part of the State, without meaning thereby, that Learning is the Essential form of the State, or that Learned men are any necessary part of its Constitution; but the meaning would be, that being parts of the State by their subjection to the Laws, their Learning makes them to be valuable above the rest of the parts. If this be M. *de Meaux*'s meaning, he says no more than he did before, *That the Elect are the noblest and most spiritual part of the Church*; he says nothing that is contrary to *Bellarmin*'s and *du Perron*'s opinion, which I charged him with; nothing but what might as well have been let alone, for he was never taxed, either with denying that the Elect might be parts of the Church, or with representing them as the less valuable, and less useful parts of it. His expression will import

no more than this, that the Elect, who by their outward profession are become parts of the Church, but are the Elect upon some other account, must be lookt upon by virtue of that Election, as the worthiest and most excellent part; so that their Election is not the thing that makes them members of it; but when they are members, it gives them a value above the rest. Now all this is impertinent to the Controversy between us, because it still continues to be taken for granted, that, in strict and proper speaking, the Elect are not Essential to the Church.

But if M. *de Meaux* took this word *Essential*, as I am verily perswaded he did, not in that vulgar, but in its proper and philosophical sence, so as to mean by it, that it is really Essential to the Church, to be in part composed of the Elect, I am extremely mistaken, if his explication, instead of bringing him out of his perplexity, do not intangle him in it more and more. Not to urge at present, that it is a very unusual thing to talk of degrees of more or less in defining the Essence of any thing, when men endeavour to deliver themselves properly; He gives us a notion of the Church, as of a whole, whose Essential Composition is of Elect Persons and Reprobates, Good and Bad, only with this difference, that the Elect and the Good are more essential to it, than the Reprobate and Wicked. *We consider the Elect*, says he, *as making the most Essential part and strength of the Church.* The Reprobates then are a less Essential part, but they are an Essential one still. Let us take this, pray, into a little more particular Examination. You have here a Body, not only put together of two contrary pieces, Friends and Enemies of God, Blessed and Cursed, but built up of both these essentially. You have a Body which essentially belongs to two different Heads, Jesus Christ and the Devil; Two very oppolite forms, Election and Reprobation; and over and above these two forms, a third, in which the two others meet, and are included, to wit, Exterior Profession. A Body too, which shall have all this in the very design and primary intention of God; for the Essence is always from the Author's first intention, and that of the Church must needs have been regularly formed in the purpose of God. You have here a Church, which, had she no Reprobates in her, would be imperfect, because one part of her Essence would then be wanting; or rather, if you will, which could not be the Church, if the Reprobates were wanting, because a thing cannot be such, unless it have all the Essence required to make it such. A Church that will have, and that essentially, two ends or events, Salvation and Damnation, Paradise and Hell; a Church, which upon its general dissolution at the Day of Judgment, shall be, in its most Essential part the portion of God; and in its less Essential, the Devil. Do not you think all this very whimsical

Eng. Reflect. p. 93.

ſical and odd, and very unbecoming a Man of M. *de Meaux*'s knowledg and abilities?

And yet every tittle of it is the evident conſequence of his expreſſion underſtood in the proper and litcral ſenſe; for, he that calls one part the moſt Eſſential, muſt ſuppoſe another part Eſſential too, tho leſs Eſſential than the former; as, when I ſay, the Soul is the moſt Eſſential part of a Man, I ſuppoſe the Body, which is the other part, to be Eſſential too, tho leſs Eſſential of the two: So that here is no body puts any thing upon M. *de Meaux*, and if he have any occaſion to complain, it is only of himſelf.

Hitherto I have only charged him with making the Eſſence of the Church to conſiſt in an *Exterior Profeſſion*, which might be common to Good and Bad Men, to the Elect and the Reprobate, and this I thought very ſtrange. But now I muſt accoſt him in other Language, and tell him, that by giving the advantage of compariſon, a more and a leſs, he hath made that Eſſence to conſiſt as much in Ungodlineſs as Godlineſs, in Reprobation as much as in Election; all that was ſaid to him before, implied no more, than that he compoſed a Church of hypocrites and wicked men, as well as of the Regenerate and Elect; now we muſt ſay, that he hath compoſed it eſſentially both of the one and the other. Before, if his Church might be compoſed wholly of hypocrites and none elſe, it might likewiſe have been compoſed wholly of good men and none elſe: Now both ſorts are become neceſſary, the one ſo, in a greater, the other in a leſs degree; ſo that there could not be any Church in the World, unleſs ſome Hypocrites were in it. Pray tell me if this be not every whit as frightful an Idea, as that other which he mentioned before?

It may perhaps be objected, that I ought not to urge this Expreſſion *More Eſſential*, which M. *de Meaux* hath made uſe of, ſo far; nor inſiſt ſo hard upon it; that it was a word ſlipt from him before he had well conſidered it; and that he only intended to ſay, that the Elect are an Eſſential part of the Church, without meaning thereby, that the Reprobates are likewiſe Eſſential to it. Thus the Anſwerer to Mr. *Malet* hath delivered himſelf; for though this latter ſpoke a little more cautiouſly than M. *de Meaux*, yet it is highly probable, that both of them had the ſame meaning.

But ſtill alas! all this is a mere ſhift. So long as the Elect are conſidered, as making one part of the Church only; and the other part conſiſting of Reprobates, this will be a very monſtrous compoſition ſtill. We ſhould judge of the Church with reſpect to the firſt deſign of it, for ſo far we muſt go to have a true and ſufficient knowledge of her: and in con-

considering it thus, such as hold the Elect to be only parts, though they grant them to be the most Essential ones, are compelled to acknowledge, that the Reprobates which make up the other part, must be also in the first design of the Church; and consequently, that they must be Essential, or at least Integrate parts of it, that is, they will be necessarily required, in order to make the Church perfect and complete. They are driven to acknowledge one of these two things, either, that God designed to make but one part of his Church, to wit, that which consists of his Elect, and left the other for the Devil to finish that; I mean, which consists of the Reprobates, which is a thing too horrid to be imagined, and attended with prodigious consequences: Or else, they must say that both these parts were of God's own designing, and first institution, which is as horrid, and liable to as prodigious consequences as the other. Because if this be once allowed, we can no longer with the Gospel tax the Enemy for sowing the Tares while men slept, but we must own this to be by the Master of the House his own order. We can no longer say, *Every plant*
Mat. 15. 13 *which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up*; but, of those plants which our heavenly Father hath planted, some shall be rooted up, and some shall be suffered to grow still. We can no longer say with St.
Eph. 1. 3. *Paul, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world:* But there must be a mixture of the Curse with the Blessing, Hell with Heaven, and Reprobation
Eph. 4. 4. with Election. It can no longer be said, *There is one Body and one Spirit*; but we must confess there is a twofold Spirit, though there be but one
Ibid. v. 12, 13. Body. It can no longer be said, *That the body of Christ is edified, till we all come in the unity of the Faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man*; But we must say, his Body is edified till we all come together, some in the unity of the Faith, and others in the unity of Hypocrisie. We cannot any longer say, that *from Christ, which is the Head, the whole body*
Ibid. v. 15, 16. *fitly joyned together and compacted, by that which every joynt supplieth, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of it self in love*; But it must be said, that one part of this body, being not fitly joyned together, nor compacted, does not make or receive any increase from the head, nor grow at all to Edification, but to the Destruction of it self.

Now if you will act agreeably to this Hypothesis, how can you excommunicate any man, though never so scandalous? and may not he in such a case very reasonably reply upon you, What right have you to cut me off from a Body, which according to it's own nature, and first institution, must be composed of dead Members as well as living, of Reprobates as well as Elect? If I be not to be reckoned among these latter, yet how-

ever

ever I must be among the former sort. What answer could be returned him upon such an occasion? Can you drive him away out of your Church for not being a good man? This can be no sufficient warrant for your proceedings, because you agree, that wicked men do in part compose the Church, even in God's own purpose, and first designation. And if you drive him out for not observing his exterior profession, and appearing no better to the World: Then you punish him for not being a dextrous cleanly Hypocrite, and make the Church a perfect *Lacedæmon*, which punishes Robbers, not because they are Robbers, but because they do not Rob with Cunning and Address. The same objection may be urged, as to your reconciling lapsed Sinners, and entertaining new Converts. Provided they promise you an exteriour profession, this is enough; you cannot reject them, because by requiring of them strictly an inward Faith, and true Piety, and firm Charity, and rejecting them, if they do not tye themselves up to all these Conditions; you would go contray to God's design, and the nature of the Church, which do both make it necessary that one of its parts should consist of wicked men and Reprobates. Such are the consequences of this new Explanation.

As for the Comparison taken from dead and putrified members in the body of a man, and that other of nails and hair, and peccant humours, so constantly made use of by the Polemical Divines of the *Romish* Church, and by M. *de Meaux*, as well as the rest, thereby to make it more clear in what manner wicked men are of the body of the Church, it does but present us with larger and more particular discoveries, how very ill an opinion that is. If there be dead and rotten members in the Body of the Church, then of necessity, there must either be two essential Forms mighty contrary to one another; the first whereof gives life to some Members, and the second lets the rest continue still dead; or, if there be but one form for all the Members, then by consequence, this does not communicate Life of it self; for if that which gives the Church its formal Existence, and constitutes Members of it, gave Life, there could not any longer be any dead or rotten Members in the Church. The first of these overthrows the Unity of the Church, and of one makes two several Churches. The second must be absurd and unnatural; for, whereas in the ordinary course of Nature, it is the form, and not the matter which conveys Life; here quite contrary, what Life appeared in the Church, would be derived from the Matter, and not the Form of the Church; and tho a man should consider her with respect to her Form only, which yet is constantly the noblest part of every thing, he might very well conceive her perfect and entire, as composed of Hypocrites and wicked Men.

M. *de*

M. *de Meaux* knows well enough, That in ſtrict and proper ſpeaking, the Body of a Man hath no dead nor putrified Members in it. To be really and truly a Member of the Body, there is a neceſſity of being informed by the common Form. And as for peccant Humours, Nails and Hair, I ſhall not diſpute whether they be part of the Body or not; but content my ſelf with anſwering in ſhort, that if they be not in any reſpect alive, and do not partake at all of the common Form, they are not in truth Parts of the Body, but only Excreſcencies from it.

Would not M. *de Meaux* have taken a better courſe, think you, if inſtead of following theſe unuſual Notions of the modern Controvertiſts, he had kept cloſe, as the Proteſtants do, to thoſe we meet with in Scripture, which making the eternal Decree of Gods Election, to differ in nothing from his purpoſe and deſign of the Church, makes us conſider the Church as the Body of ſuch as God by his mercy hath ſingled out from the reſt of Mankind, whom he hath effectually given to Jeſus Chriſt, to be redeemed by his Blood, and in time by means of his Holy Spirit and Word, be infallibly brought unto everlaſting Life, without admitting into this Body the Wicked and Reprobates, who cannot be made partakers of this glorious Name, the Church of Jeſus Chriſt, without doing it diſhonour. Had he not better have followed St. *Auguſtin*'s Notions, out of whoſe writting I have already produced ſo many Teſtimonies? Obſerve how he ſpeaks to this purpoſe in his Comment on the forty fourth *Pſalm*, * *Jeſus Chriſts Garments are his Saints, his Elect, his whole Church, which he hath fitted for himſelf as a Garment without ſpot and wrinkle, waſhing it in his Blood to take out the ſpots, and ſtretching it on his Croſs to ſmooth the wrinkles.* † *Wicked men*, ſays he in another part of his Writings, *ſuch I mean, as are not really changed for the better, may both Adminiſter and receive Baptiſm; but it is plain they do not belong to God's Holy Church, tho they ſeem within the Boſom of it. For theſe are Covetous Men, Extortioners, Uſurers, Envious, Malicious; but the Church is his only Dove, his chaſt One, the Spouſe without ſpot or wrinkle, the incloſed Garden, the ſealed Fountain, the Orchard of Pomegranats, and the other Titles given to her, which are to be underſtood of the Good, the Holy, and the Juſt only.*

* Veſtimenta ejus ſunt ſancti ejus, Electi ejus, tota Eccleſia ejus; quam ſibi ſicut veſtem exhibet, ſine macula & ruga. Propter maculam abluens in ſanguine, propter rugam extendens in Cruce, *Auguſtin in Pſalm.* 44. *Enarrat. Edit. Baſil.* 1569.

† Habere autem baptiſmum, & tradere, & accipere malos nequaquam in melius commutatos demonſtravimus, quos non pertinere ad ſanctam Eccleſiam Dei, quamvis intus eſſe videantur, ex hoc apertiſſime apparet; quia iſti ſunt avari, raptores, fæneratores, invidi, malevoli, & cætera hujuſmodi; illa autem columba unica, pudica & caſta, ſponſa ſine macula & ruga, hortus concluſus, fons ſignatus, paradiſus cum fructu pomorum & cætera quæ de illa ſimiliter dicta ſunt; quod non intelligitur, niſi in bonis, & ſanctis & juſtis. *Aug. de Bapt. Contra Donatiſt. Lib.* 6. *Cap.* 3.

Or,

Or, wherefore should he not agree with St. *Bernard* in his Notions? Who speaks thus, ‖ *What is the Spouse, but the Congregation of the Just? What is that, but the Generation of them that seek the Lord, and the Face of the Bridegroom? For we must not think he regards her only, and not she him,* Cant. 2. 16. *For this reason the Scripture mentions both, My beloved is mine, and I am his. He is mine, because Good and Merciful; and I am his, because not Ungrateful. He gives me Grace from Grace, I return him Grace for Grace. He labours for my Deliverance, and I for his Honour. He to work my Salvation, and I to accomplish his Will. He is mine, and not anothers; because I am his only Dove, and I am his and not anothers, because I hearken not to the Voice of Strangers, nor believe those that tell me, Lo, here is Christ, or lo, he is there. This is the Church.* Here is nothing of dead and rotten Members in all this.

‖ Quid sponsa nisi congregatio justorum; Quid ipsa nisi generatio quærentium dominum? quærentium faciem Sponsi? Non enim ille intendit huic, & non ista illi. Propterea utrumque ponit dicens, Ille mihi, & ego illi. Ille mihi, quia benignus & misericors est; Ego illi, quia non sum ingrata. Ille mihi gratiam ex gratia, ego illi gratiam pro gratia. Ille meæ liberationi, ego illius honori. Ille saluti meæ, ego illius voluntati; Ille mihi, & non alteri, quoniam una sum Columba ejus; Ego illi, & non alteri, nec enim audio vocem alienorum; nec enim acquiesco dicentibus mihi, Ecce hic est Christus, aut ecce illic est. Hæc Ecclesia, *Bellarm. Serm.* 68. *Super Cantic. Edit. Basil.* 1566.

Why should he not conform to *Hugo de S. Victor*'s Notions? ∴ *He that hath not the Spirit of Christ*, says he, *is no Member of Christ. In this Body which is one, there is one Spirit. Within this Body there is nothing dead, out of it nothing alive. We become Members of it by Faith, and we are enlivened by*

∴ Qui non habet Spiritum Christi, non est Membrum Christi. In corpore uno Spiritus unus. Nihil in corpore mortuum, nihil extra corpus vivum. Per fidem Membra efficimur, per dilectionem vivificamur, per fidem accipimus unionem, per Charitatem accipimus vivificationem.—— Ecclesia sancta corpus est Christi, uno Spiritu vivificata, & unita fide una, & Sanctificata. Hujus corporis membra singuli quique fidelium existunt, omnes corpus unum, propter Spiritum unum, & fidem unam. Quemadmodum autem in corpore humano, singula quæq; membra propria ac discreta officia habent, & tamen unumquodq; non sibi soli agit, quod solum agit; sic in Corpore sanctæ Ecclesiæ dona gratiarum distributa sunt, & tamen unusquisq; non sibi soli habet etiam id quod solus habet. Soli enim oculi vident, & tamen sibi solummodo non vident, sed toti corpori; solæ autem aures audiunt,--- soli pedes ambulant, & non sibi, sed toti corpori. Et ad huc modum-- secundum dispositionem optimi largitoris, & distributoris sapientissimi, singula sunt omnium, & omnia singulorum —— Hac itaq; similitudine, Ecclesia sancta, id est, Universitas fidelium, Corpus Christi vocatur, propter Spiritum Christi quem accepit, cujus participatio in nomine designatur, quando à Christo Christianus appellatur. Hoc itaq; nomen signat membra Christi participantia Spiritum Christi —— Christus quippe Unctus interpretatur, illo videlicet oleo lætitiæ, quod præ cunctis participibus suis secundum plenitudinem accipit, & cunctis participibus suis quasi caput Membris, secundum participationem transfudit. Sicut unguentum in capite quod descendit a capite in barbam, & deinde usq; in Oram id est, Extremitatem vestimenti, defluxit, ut ad totum effluret, & totum vivificaret. Quando ergo Christianus efficeris, membrum Christi efficeris, membrum corporis Christi, participans Spiritum Christi; Quid est ergo Ecclesia, nisi multitudo fidelium, Universitas Christianorum? *Hugo de S. Victore Lib* 2. *de Sacrament. Par.* 2. *cap.* 1, 2. *Edit. Mogunt.* 1617.

Charity. Faith unites us, and Charity quickens and animates us. And a little after, *The Holy Church is Jesus Christ's Body, quickned by one Spirit, united and sanctified by one Faith. The Members of this Body are every particular Believer, which altogether make one Body, because of the one Spirit of Christ, and one Faith. And, as in the Body of a Man, the Members have each of them their several Offices distinct, and yet what each of them does, it does not for it self alone; so in the Body of the Holy Church, Gifts and Graces are imparted to every one, and yet what each single Person hath alone, he hath not for his own sake alone. The Eyes see, but they see for the whole Body, and not for themselves alone. The Ears only hear, and the Feet only walk, yet is it not for themselves only, but for the whole Body; and in the same manner, by the wise and good disposal of Almighty God, every thing is designed for the benefit of all the Members, and all things for each of them. After the same manner, the Holy Church, that is, the Society of the faithful, is called the Body of Christ, upon the account of Christs Spirit which it hath received, and the very Name of Christian being derived from Christ, denotes this Participation of the Spirit. This Name marks out the Members of Christ partaking of Christs Spirit. Christ signifies Anointed with that Oyl of Gladness which he received in full proportion above his Fellows, and which, as the head, he conveys down to the Members, like Aaron's Oyl, that went down from his Head to his Beard, and even to the Skirts of his Clothing; and so this flows through every part, and enlivens every part. When you therefore are made a Christian, you are made a Member of Christ, a Member of Christ's Body, a partaker of Christ's Spirit. What then is the Church, but the Company of Believers, the whole Society of Christians?* There is no discerning any dead or rotten Members in it hitherto.

Or, why should we not agree with *Nicolas de Lyra* his Notions? * *The Gates of Hell* (says he) *shall not prevail against the Church, that is, so as to make her utterly fall away from the true Faith. Whence it is plain, That the Church does not consist of Men, with regard to their Power or Dignity, Ecclesiastical or Secular, because that many Princes and Popes, and others of a lower Rank have Apostatized plainly from the true Faith. The Church then consists in Persons that have and do retain the true Knowledg and Confession of the Faith, and the Truth.*

* Non prævalebunt adversus eam. —— A vera fide subvertendo, ex quo patet, quod Ecclesia non consistit in hominibus ratione potestatis, vel dignitatis Ecclesiasticæ vel Sæcularis, quia multi Principes, & summi Pontifices & alii inferiores inventi sunt Apostatasse a fide. Propter quod Ecclesia consistit in illis personis, in quibus est notitia vera, & confessio fidei, & veritatis, *Lyra in Matth. 16. vid. Gloss. Ordin. Edit. Antverp.* 1634.

Or,

Or, why ſhould we diſſent from thoſe of Cardinal *Cajetan?* † St. *Paul*, he ſays, *calls the Church Jeſus Chriſts Body, that is, his Myſtical Body, for the Faithful are as it were Members of Jeſus Chriſt. And upon this account the company of the Faithful, meant by the word Church, is the Body of Chriſt. The Apoſtle here very appoſitely ſubjoyns his Fulneſs, to repreſent to us a Body compoſed of all its Parts. The Church is Jeſus Chriſts Body, becauſe it is his fulneſs, the fulneſs of Him that filleth all in all, that is, a Body which by being compleat in all its Parts, is anſwerable to him that filleth all in all. The Church is, as a Body perfect throughout, and proportioned to Jeſus Chriſt its Head, as the Body with its Members and Parts, is proportioned to the living Creature. But Chriſt fills all and every thing Spiritually, in all his Members and Parts, much more, than the Soul fills all the Parts of the Body animated by it. Theſe words give us a Deſcription of the Church in her entire Perfection, and of the Efficacy and Sufficiency of Jeſus Chriſt for the whole Church, and every one of his Members in particular.* And ſomething further, ‖ *The Church is not only Chriſts Body, but a Body formed of Chriſts own Fleſh and Bones upon the Croſs. For the Fleſh and Bones of Jeſus Chriſt upon the Croſs, contributed more to the forming Jeſus Chriſts Myſtical Body, the Church, than the Fleſh and Bones of* Adam *ever did to the forming* Eve; *becauſe the Fleſh and Blood of Chriſt upon the Croſs contributed their own Life to form the Body of the Church; and this is what* Adam's *Fleſh and Bones never contributed.* And now I beſeech you, where are theſe dead and rotten Members, which M. *de Meaux* will needs admit into the Compoſition of the Church?

† Eccleſiam appellat Corpus Chriſti, proculdubio Myſticum. Sunt enim fideles velut membra Chriſti; ac per hoc Congregatio fidelium, quam Eccleſia nomen ſignificat, eſt Corpus Chriſti — Appoſitive ſiquidem dicit *Plenitudo* ejus, ad explicandum Corpus conſtans omnibus membris. Eccleſia eſt Corpus ejus (ut pote plenitudo ejus) qui omnia in omnibus implet, hoc eſt, plenitudine Univerſarum partium correſpondens illi, qui implet omnia in omnibus. Eccleſia eſt velut plenum ex omnibus partibus corpus, implens Chriſtum, ſicut corpus implet animal membris & partibus. Chriſtus vero implet omnia, & ſingula in omnibus partibus, & membris ſpiritualiter, multo magis quam anima implet omnes partes corporis vivificando. Integritas Eccleſiæ per hæc deſcribitur, ſimul cum efficientia & ſufficientia Chriſti, ad univerſam Eccleſiam, & ſingula Membra. *Cajetan. in ep. ad Epheſ. Edit. Paris* 1571.

‖ Eccleſia non ſolum eſt Corpus Chriſti, ſed & corpus formatum de carne Chriſti, & de oſſibus Chriſti in cruce. Multo enim plus contulerunt caro Chriſti, & oſſa Chriſti in cruce, ad formandum Corpus Chriſti Myſticum, quod eſt Eccleſia, quam contulerunt caro Adæ, & oſſa Adæ ad formandam uxorem ejus Evam; quoniam caro Chriſti, & oſſa Chriſti in cruce contulerunt vitam propriam ad formandum corpus Eccleſiæ, Adæ vero caro & oſſa non contulerunt propriam vitam. *Cajetan. in* 5. *Epheſ.*

M. *de Meaux his Tenth Reflection Examined, concerning the ſenſe of that Article in our Creed:* I believe the Catholick Church.

M. *de Meaux* having given us his ſenſe upon that queſtion which concerns the true notion of the Church, in the manner you have already ſeen, proceeds to a Tenth Reflection; which indeed is not ſo properly a Reflection, as a kind of Story which he hath thought fit to relate to us. However, ſuch as it is, I will take it into Examination. It conſiſts of a Preamble, that ſerves to introduce the Story; then comes the Narration it ſelf, and afterwards there follow ſome Conſequences, which M. *de Meaux* pretends to deduce from it.

Meaux's Eng. Reflect. p. 95.

In this Preamble he tells us, That, to ſhew that the word Church ſignifies in the Apoſtles Creed a viſible Church, I laid for a foundation, that in a Confeſſion of Faith, ſuch as this Creed was, words were uſed in their moſt natural and moſt ſimple ſignification: And I added, that the word Church ſignified ſo naturally the viſible Church, that the Pretended Reformed, Authors of the Chimera of an inviſible Church, in all their Confeſſions of Faith, never uſed the word Church in this ſenſe, but only to expreſs the viſible Church, cloath'd with the Sacraments, with the Word, and withal the publick Miniſtry. See the paſſages of the Confeſſion of Faith I have related, with the Conſequences I have drawn from them.

Now ſince M. *de Meaux* was deſirous to repreſent to us, what he deſigned to do in his Inſtruction, it was not juſt however for the giving an advantage to this one word, *To ſhew*, which carries off a Man's mind to other Ideas, that he ſhould conceal from us ſeveral truths, very important, and highly neceſſary to be known in the caſe. He conceals from us his having charged the Proteſtants with miſunderſtanding that Article of the Creed, *I believe the Catholick*, or, Univerſal *Church*, and the invidious compariſons he made upon that occaſion, betwixt Them, and the *Arrians*, the *Macedonians*, and *Socinians*. He conceals from us, that this accuſation was followed by a full and perfect juſtification of the Proteſtants in this particular, and the matter ſo handled, that he was reduced to a neceſſity of either withdrawing his accuſation, or engaging againſt that defence of theirs. He ſays not a word of our having made it appear to him, both by the teſtimony of St. *Auguſtin*, and the Council of *Trent*'s Catechiſm, that the true meaning of theſe words, *The Catholick Church*, is, the whole body of true believers, who have been, are, and at any time ſhall be, from the beginning to the end of the

the World. He omits our having ſhewed him this true meaning proved by the very nature of the thing it ſelf, and the expreſs words of the Creed. He never tells the World of our making it out to him, that the Scriptures conſtantly uſe the word in this ſenſe, whenſoever they mention it, with regard to its notion of *Univerſality*, as the Creed does. He ſays nothing of our maintaining againſt him, that theſe words the *Univerſal Church*, are not capable of any other, either more proper, or more natural ſignification, than That. And laſtly, he conceals the obſervation we made, of a very conſiderable defect in his manner of arguing, in that he goes about to prove this pretended meaning of that expreſſion, *the Univerſal Church*, by that which is frequently given to that term, *the Church*, when found ſingle, tho there be no manner of Conſequence from the one of theſe to the other. All this M. *de Meaux* very induſtriouſly and cunningly ſlurs over, and ſpeaks not a word of, as if he were not one jot concerned in it. And yet methinks it is plain enough to be diſcerned, that, if he would have dealt ſincerely and fairly, he ought to have taken ſome notice of it, and to have added in his own behalf, that either he replied to, or acquieſced in theſe things.

But let us look into that which M. *de Meaux* ſays, he deſigned to ſhew, in the inſtruction given to *Mademoiſelle de Duras*; *It was* (ſays he) *that the word Church ſignifies in the Creed, a viſible Church.* Wherefore ſhould a Man of his Character take ſuch pains to be obſcure? If the eſtabliſhing this aſſertion, that the word Church in the Creed includes a viſible Church, be all he aimed at, he would have been at a great deal of trouble, that might as well have been ſpared, and the repetition of his Argument over again in this place, would be ſtill more ſuperfluous, after having ſeen what I repreſented to him; that the Univerſal Church in our Creed, muſt be extended to the Church now in Heaven, and that which ſhall be in the future Ages, and that which is at preſent upon Earth. The laſt of theſe, tho inviſible in ſome reſpects, does yet continue to be viſible in ſome others; ſo that it would have been needleſs and unprofitable to inſiſt upon the proof of a thing wherein we were both agreed before.

But in truth, his deſign was to advance two things: The one, That the word *Catholick or Univerſal Church* in the Creed, ſignifies a viſible Church only, and not one that is inviſible in any reſpect. This is the thing his proof, and the whole managery of it drives at, and upon this account, he calls the Inviſible Church, a Chimæra. *The Pretended Reformed* (ſaith he) *are the Authors of the Chimæra of an Inviſible Church.* Page 95. The ſecond thing he would eſtabliſh, is, that by this viſible Church, to which he thinks the ſenſe of that Article in our Creed muſt be confined,

muſt

must be understood, not the Church of True believers only, how visible soever that may be, but a Church composed of good and bad, elect and reprobate promiscuously. For this is the *Helena* so vehemently contended for by the modern disputants, as being abundantly sensible, how absolutely necessary it is to the support of their blind obedience. Upon this account, M. *de Meaux* in his Instruction, hath put a formal distinction between his visible Church, and the company of the predestinate, as the whole is distinguished from one of its parts. *The Society of the Predestinate*, he says, *are not excluded from it, God forbid, they are the most noble part of it, but they are comprised in the whole.* When he tells us here, his design was to shew, that the word Church in the Creed signifies a visible Church, it must be understood, that his design was to shew, that the Universal Church, which we profess to believe in the Creed, signifies nothing else but a visible and exterior Church, that, I mean, which is composed of good and bad, of true believers and hypocrites indifferently.

Meaux's Eng. Conf. p. 6.

This was the very thing M. *de Meaux* pretended to, and what in truth he designed to shew, upon which account I have offered two things against him; the one, that the word Church in our Creed must be allowed to extend a great deal farther than the visible Church; and besides the Church at present upon Earth, it must also take in that which is in Heaven, and that also which, as yet, is not in being; which two are parts very far from being visible. The other thing I offered in reply was, that the true visible Church upon Earth, is not all that exterior Society that gathers together good and bad men promiscuously; but that it consists solely in the Society of True Believers, and righteous persons.

This remark is necessary to be made, that so the true state of the Question between us may be apprehended clearly, without any ambiguity or equivocation; and it is likewise so, because from hence we may be able to judg of the strength or weakness of M. *de Meaux* his Argument, as he himself represents it to us. *I laid*, says he, *for a foundation, that in a Confession of Faith, such as the Creed is, words were used in their most natural and simple signification; and I added, that the word* Church *signified so naturally the visible Church, that the Pretended Reformed Authors of the Chimera of an invisible Church, in all their Confessions of Faith, never used the word* Church *in this sense; but only to express the visible Church, cloathed with the Sacraments, with the Word, and with all the publick Ministry.*

Eng. Reflect. p. 95.

M. *de Meaux* his Argument may be reduced to this form: The word *Church* in the Creed must be taken in the same signification that it is naturally taken in, by the Pretended Reformed in their Confession of Faith;

Faith; But in the Pretended Reformed's Confeſſion of Faith it is naturally taken for a viſible Church; therefore it muſt be taken for a viſible Church in the Creed.

This Argument hath two faults: The firſt is, what I took notice of before, That to ſhew *the Univerſal Church* ſignifies a viſible Church, he goes about to prove it, by ſaying, the ſingle word *Church* in our Confeſſion of Faith, ſignifies naturally a viſible Church only. 'Tis juſt as if I ſhould ſay, that theſe words, *the Whole Earth*, do naturally ſignify no more than my Field, or my Vineyard, or the ground I dwell upon, becauſe I naturally give my Field, or my Vineyard, or the ground I dwell upon, the name of *Earth* taken ſingly, and expreſt in one word. Now, as it would be moſt abſurd to argue at that rate, becauſe it might preſently be objected, that theſe words, *the whole Earth*, naturally ſignifies the whole Globe of the Earth; whereas that of *Earth* ſingle, may be applied to any particular parcel of that Globe, ſo that there could be no manner of conſequence deduced from the one to the other; juſt as abſurd is M. *de Meaux* his way of reaſoning in our Caſe. The words *Univerſal Church* ſignify one thing, and the word *Church* taken ſingle, another; *The Univerſal Church* naturally denotes the whole myſtical body of Chriſt, *The Church* alone is a word that may very naturally be ſpoken of any part of this Myſtical Body. So that to argue from the one to the other, is a mere Sophiſtry; for it puts more in the Concluſion, than was contained in the Premiſes.

But this is not all, That Argument is ſtill chargeable with another defect, full as intolerable as the former. This conſiſts in that equivocating term *the Viſible Church*; for it is not true, that the word *Church* is meant in our Confeſſion of Faith, of a viſible Church, in the ſame ſenſe that M. *de Meaux* would have us interpret it in the Creed. He would have the meaning of it in the Creed to be, a viſible Church compoſed of good and bad men together; and in our Confeſſion of Faith, we mean by it a viſible Church compoſed of the true Believers only; ſo that here are two ſorts of viſibility, very different from one another.

If you would therefore know the true ſtate of M. *de Meaux*'s Argument, it may be thus diſcovered; The words *Univerſal Church* muſt be taken in the Creed, in the ſame ſenſe that you naturally take the ſingle word *Church* in your Confeſſion of Faith.

But in your Confeſſion of Faith you take the ſingle word *Church* for a viſible Church, by ſuch a viſibility, as the Society of True Believers only are viſible by.

There-

Therefore the words, *Universal Church*, must be taken in the Creed, for a Church visible in such a manner, as a mixt Society of good and bad men are visible.

The first of these Propositions is evidently contrary to common sense; the second is a granted truth; but the Conclusion is absurd. And in general, the whole Syllogism consists of five terms; (1.) The term *Universal Church* in the Creed. (2.) The word *Church* taken single in the Confession of Faith. (3.) The Visibility of a Society of True Believers. (4.) The Visibility of a Society of good and bad men together. (5.) The *Conformity* between the Creed, and that Confession of Faith. This sure a Man may be allowed with some degree of Confidence to call an ill Argument.

Meaux's Eng. Refl. p. 96.

After this Preamble, M. *de Meaux* tells us a Story of a National Synod of *Gap*, and another of *Rochell*, with which he intermixes a blind account of some certain Printers, who used to reprint the Confession of Faith with this Title forbidden in the Synod; *The Confession of Faith of the Reformed Churches, reviewed and corrected in the National Synod.* He tells us then, that it was decreed in the Synod of *Gap*, *That the Provincial Synods should examine what was to be amended in the Twenty fifth Article of the Confession, forasmuch as being to express what we believe, touching the Catholick Church, of which mention is made in the Creed, there is nothing in the said Confession, that can be taken, but for the Militant, and Visible* Pag. 97. *Church.* He adds, *That in the National Synod of* Rochel, *it was resolved, not to add, or diminish any thing in the terms of the Confession of Faith. So that* (says he) *by the decision of this Synod, the Visible Church alone appears in the Pretended Reformed's Confession of Faith; the Invisible Church hath no part in it, and one draws from it Consequences as one can.*

We shall see presently, whether the Inferences M. *de Meaux* deduces from this Story, be of such weight and consideration as he imagines. At present I need only say, that there is nothing appears in the proceedings of these Synods, but what is very usual with all Assemblies. The Synod of *Gap* had desired, that the Confession of Faith might make more particular and express mention of the whole Body of the Universal Church spoken of in the Creed; and, whereas it took notice of the militant and visible part only, that it might also express the invisible parts of it, which are the triumphant Church already in Heaven, and that which is yet to come. This motion of theirs seemed to be well grounded enough. The Synod of *Rochel* did not think it at all necessary, to add any thing to the former terms of the Confession; and they had their Reasons too. Indeed, considering that the Confession of Faith does in its fifth Article formally receive the Apostles Creed, in which

which men confeſs the Univerſal Church, and no body had ever yet denied, that the Church of the Saints in bliſs, nor that of the faithful which ſhall ſpring up in ſucceeding Ages, are parts of that Church; and much leſs ſtill was it ever denied, that theſe two parts are not viſible to our eyes; this was eſteemed ſufficient for a ſhort confeſſion, in which every thing could not poſſibly be explained at large. All that the Synod of *Rochel* can be charged with, muſt be, that not being compoſed of prudent, honeſt men, they did not foreſee that this Confeſſion's not mentioning the Church to come hereafter in expreſs terms, would one day be objected in diſpute againſt us. Had they had the leaſt foreſight or ſuſpicion of this, poſſibly they might have ſpoiled M. *de Meaux* his Story; but it is as poſſible too, that they would never have troubled themſelves about it, nor thought ſuch wretched little ſcruples worth their conſideration.

For my own part, whatever I think of this Prelate's perſon, I muſt confeſs, I look upon his Narration, and the Conſequences he pretends to draw from it, as a very trifling piece of buſineſs; and all I can gather from it, is only that M. *de Meaux* is liable to be impoſed upon, as well as the reſt of the World. This will very manifeſtly appear, if we obſerve, that three ſorts of *Inviſibility* are attributed by us to the Church. The firſt is that which conceals from us the two greateſt parts of this whole, called the *Univerſal Church*, to wit, that part now in Heaven, and that which is not yet in being. The ſecond is that which hinders us from diſcerning the interior form of the Church at preſent upon Earth, I mean, true Regeneration, and true Piety, which are not viſible of themſelves, but only by their marks and characters, and theſe are frequently very deceitful, with reſpect to particular perſons. The third is that which ſometimes darkens thoſe very marks and characters of the Church, to ſuch a degree, that a Man can ſcarcely know them. The firſt may be called an Inviſibility of the parts, the ſecond an Inviſibility of the Form or Eſſence, and the third an Inviſibility of the Marks or Characters.

It is plain, that of theſe three ſorts, only the ſecond and third can be the ſubject of a diſpute between us and the Church of *Rome*. For the firſt, no man ever did, or could deny. Interpret the term *Catholick Church* in the Creed, which way you will, ſtill it muſt be granted, that theſe three parts make up but one Body: And it is as certain, that of theſe three parts, two of them muſt be Inviſible. M. *de Meaux* muſt have excellent Eyes if he could ſee the Company of Saints in Paradiſe; and be very ſharp-ſighted, to diſcern that Company of the Faithful which ſhall be hereafter in ſucceeding Generations. This Inviſibility

then he cannot contend with me about. And yet this is the only visibility treated of in the Synods of *Gap* and *Rochel*; this is the only one not expressly mentioned in the Confession of Faith, that which the Synod of *Gap* desired might be particularly inserted, but the Synod of *Rochel* judged needless to have inserted. And upon this alone it is, that M. *de Meaux* keeps such a bustle, and argues so violently. *The Pretended Reformed*, he says, *are the Authors of the Chimera of an Invisible Church, and yet this is not in their Confession of Faith, as appears by the Synods of* Gap *and* Rochel; *and if it be not in their Confession of Faith, they must own it is not in Scripture, otherwise their Confession is not conformable to Scripture, which they pretend it is. Now if the Invisible Church be not in the Scripture, then neither is it in the Creed. Mr.* Claude *and the Protestants will not deny it. The Church then is taken, both in the Scripture and in the Creed for a Visible Church.*

What a world of noise is here about little or nothing! If M. *de Meaux* could have discovered, that the two other sorts of Invisibility, which are in controversy between the Protestants, and those of the *Roman* Communion, are not to be found in the Confession of Faith, he might make some advantage of that, and deduce what consequences he thought fit from it. But to argue at random about our Confessions, making no express mention of an Invisibility own'd and acknowledged on both sides, what benefit can this be to him? Does not he himself confess this Invisibility? Does not he think, that these two parts of the Church, the one in Heaven, the other yet future, are not visible by us? If so, Why does he call it a Chimera of the Protestants? Let Infidels and Pagans call it a Chimera of the Christians, in God's name let them do it, 'tis their unbelief that makes them say so of it. But how shall we excuse M. *de Meaux*, who acknowledges and believes it, when he calls it a Chimera? And does he do his Religion any great service or credit in making Protestants to be the Authors of it? *But*, says he, *it is not in your Confession of Faith.* What great matter whether it be or no, since it is a point, in which, by the Grace of God, both Communions are agreed? *But if it be not in your Confession, it is not in the Scriptures neither.* Both sides of us would be very unhappy, if it were not in Scripture; and since all of us believe it is, to what purpose should he give himself all this trouble to take it away from thence? Tho it were not in the Confession of Faith, it might be in the Scripture, I hope, for all that; since neither their, nor our Confessions, can possibly contain all that is contain'd in Scripture. *But*, says he further, *if it be not in Scripture, then neither will it be in the Creed.* If M. *de Meaux* cannot find it in the Creed, let him give me leave to refer him once more to St. *Augustin*, who discovered

covered it there, and to the Council of *Trent*'s Catechiſm, which found it there as well as St. *Auguſtin*; and to tell him withal, that it is an affected ſingularity in him, to refuſe acknowledging it to be there. M. *de Meaux* will ſay, *It makes for him, that the word Church ſhould be taken alike both in the Scripture and the Creed, for a viſible Church.* But how does this make for him? Is it becauſe the Inviſibility now diſcours'd of, is not conſiſtent with the viſibility, in reſpect of ſeveral parts? Are not the ſame Earth, the ſame Stars, the ſame Sun, Moon, and Heavens viſible, and inviſible to us at the ſame time, according to the different poſition of their ſeveral parts? To what purpoſe then ſhould he be ſo ſtiff for taking the Churches Inviſibility out of the Creed, upon pretence of eſtabliſhing her Viſibility, when both the one and the other may be there together, conſidered in different reſpects? Was there any need of fetching engines from *Gap* and *Rochel* for this, and diſplaying all this fine Contexture of Arguments, which would end at laſt in nothing elſe, but the ſubverſion of what we believe? in taking away out of the Scripture and Creed, a thing that is evidently contained in both; and to take it away too, when there was no neceſſity for it, no advantage to be got by it, and contrary to the expreſs teſtimony of what is moſt authentick in his own Communion? If all this be not a blind ſide in him, I do not know what can deſerve that name.

What will become then of M. *de Meaux*'s Conſequences and his Arguments? As for that which he calls his *Pinching Conſequence*, I am in good hopes, how pinching ſoever it may be, to make it more gentle ond eaſy; and for that Argument *that will overturn the whole pretended Reformation*, this, if I am not mightily miſtaken, will be eaſily blown off. The pinching Conſequence is, *That if the Church appears, only as viſible, in the Reformed's Confeſſion of Faith; and if, beſides, they aſſert this Confeſſion of Faith, as conformable in all points to the Scripture, they muſt tell us, that this manner of explicating the Church, comes from the Scripture, and that from Scripture it has paſt naturally into the ordinary Language of Chriſtians, into the Confeſſions of Faith, and conſequently into the Creed, which is not only the beſt authoriſed of all Confeſſions, but alſo the moſt ſimple.* Eng. Refl. page 98. Pag. 97, 98.

I anſwer, it is true, that this acceptation of the word *Church*, for a Viſible Church, as our Confeſſion takes it, does come from Scripture, and that from the Scripture it hath naturally paſt into the ordinary Language of Chriſtians, and into their Confeſſions of Faith, when the word is met with in this ſenſe. But then I ſay withal, that the acceptation of the ſame word for an Inviſible Church, with reſpect to ſome of its parts, does as well every whit, and in the very ſame manner, come from the ſame Scripture, and, that from the ſame Scripture

it hath naturally past into the ordinary Language of Christians, and into their Confessions of Faith, when the word occurs in this last sense. These two Propositions are both as true as one another; and if you would be satisfied how it comes to pass they are so, it is, because it is as natural for the Scripture to take the word in this last sense, as to take it in the first; as natural to understand an Invisible Church by it, as a Visible, according as the matter in hand, and the connexion of the discourse require. Since then the term *Universal* or *Catholick* is subjoyned to that of Church in our Creed, it is evident our Creed hath followed one of those natural senses in Scripture, where by the word Church it understands the whole mystical Body of Jesus Christ, the greater part whereof is Invisible to us. And for our Confession of Faith, which lookt upon the Church under another respect, That hath followed the other natural sence in Scripture, which by this word intends to signify a Visible Church. Thus both the Creed, and the Confession of Faith agree with Scripture exactly, tho they use this word in different Sences. And now see what becomes of M. *de Meaux* his pinching Consequence? As for his *overturning* Argument, he gives it us in form thus. *The word* Church *ought to be taken in the pretended Reformed's Confession of Faith, as it is naturally taken in Scripture; otherwise in a fundamental Article of the Christian Religion, this Confession of Faith would not be conformable, as it pretends, to the Holy Scripture. Now in this Confession of Faith, the word* Church *is taken for a visible Society; this Proposition is acknowledged in the Synod of* Gap, *as we saw just now. 'Tis thus then, that the word* Church *is naturally taken in Holy Scripture. But it is taken in the Creed in the same Sense that it is taken in Scripture. This Mr.* Claude *and the Protestants will not deny; therefore it is taken alike both in the Scripture and in the Creed, for a visible Church.*

Eng. Refl. pag. 98.

This *overturning* Argument is nothing else, but the *pinching Consequence* disguised, and drest up in form of a Syllogism; since therefore M. *de Meaux* hath thought fit to reduce it into form, I hope he will please to give me leave to put my Answer into form too. I say then, that of the first of the two Arguments just now proposed, is in the third Figure. Now, this he cannot but know, is an avowed Principle, that all Conclusions in the third Figure can be only particular; and for a man to go about forming an Universal Conclusion, whether he attempt it by expressing the term of Universality, or understanding it, is a mere Sophism, and good for nothing but to surprise and and confound the Unlearned. All the Conclusion then, that M. *de Meaux* can draw, is, that *sometimes* the word *Church* is naturally taken in Scripture for a visible Church, which is a thing we never dispute with him about. This is all

that

that can be deduced from that Conformity which ought to be between the Confeſſion of Faith, and the Scripture; for to vindicate this Conformity, it is not neceſſary, as is plain to every Body, that the Scripture ſhould *always* take the word *Church* in the ſame Senſe that the Confeſſion of Faith takes it; it is enough that the Scripture take it ſo *ſometimes.* If M. *de Meaux* will puſh it on further, and infer that the word *Church* muſt be always taken in Scripture, as it is in the Confeſſion of Faith, he trifles with Us, and abuſes his own Reaſon. He muſt therefore correct his Concluſion, and ſay in this Senſe the word *Church* is ſometimes naturally taken in Scripture. And here we muſt diſtinguiſh between a determinate *ſometimes*, ſo as to ſay, *That time particularly*; and an indeterminate *ſometimes*, ſo as to ſay, *At that particular time, or at ſome other.* In the firſt Senſe we will deny his Principle, becauſe evidently falſe; In the ſecond, we will grant him that, but deny his Concluſion, becauſe it is evidently inconſequential.

Such as do not underſtand this Jargon of the Schools, will poſſibly have a clearer Apprehenſion of the thing, by the following Deſcription.

The word *Church* muſt be taken in the Confeſſion of Faith, as it is naturally taken in Scripture. *I grant it.*

Now in this Confeſſion of Faith, the word *Church* is taken for a viſible Society. *I grant that too.*

Therefore the word *Church* is naturally taken in this Senſe, in Scripture. *This is a falſe Concluſion, unleſs* ſometimes *be added, and it run thus,*

Therefore the word *Church* is ſometimes naturally taken in this Senſe, in Scripture. *Otherwiſe, the Argument is without form, and none at all.*

But it is taken in the Creed, in the ſame Senſe it is taken in Scripture. *This Antecedent being deduced from the Concluſion of the foregoing Argument, muſt be amended thus.*

But it is taken in the Creed in the ſame Senſe that it is ſometimes taken in, in Scripture. *Here I diſtinguiſh between a determinate ſometimes, ſo as to ſay, That time particularly; and an indeterminate ſometimes, ſo as to ſay, This particular time, or ſome other time. In the firſt Senſe, I deny the Antecedent; in the ſecond, I allow it.*

It is therefore taken alike both in the Scripture, and in the Creed, for a viſible Church. *I deny this Conſequence, becauſe it is plain it does not follow from the Premiſſes.*

This

This now is what M. *de Meaux* calls his *overturning* Argument, but what any other Man would call, A raw ſhallow Sophiſm. How could this Prelate be ſo blind as not to ſee, that the word *Church* may be taken in Scripture, ſometimes for the whole Body, and ſometimes for one of its Parts; ſometimes to ſignifie the Church in one Reſpect and Capacity, and ſometimes in another, according as the preſent Matter of the Diſcourſe requires, and that all theſe different Acceptations of the word are very natural? How came he not to diſcern, that by this means our Confeſſion of Faith, and the Creed, may both of them agree with Scripture, and yet not both agree with one another; becauſe the Creed may take the word *Church* conformably to Scripture in one Signification, and the Confeſſion in conformity to the ſame Scripture may take it in another? Who does not know, that the word *Heaven* is naturally taken in Scripture, ſometimes for that part of the Heavens that is viſible to us, and ſometimes for that whole vaſt Expanſion, that includes both Hemiſpheres? So that two ſeveral men, one of whom may take Heaven in the firſt Senſe, and the other in the ſecond, ſhall differ mightily from one another, and yet both of them agree with Scripture exactly? Is it fit now, that ſuch a man as M. *de Meaux* ſhould inſiſt upon ſuch wretched Trifles as theſe, and pretend out of them to form his *pinching* Conſequences, and his *overturning* Arguments?

The Eleventh Reflection Examined, upon Mr. Claude's *own acknowledging the Churches perpetual Viſibility.*

IT may be ſaid with a great deal of Truth, That the Controverſy between the Gentlemen of the *Romiſh* Communion and us, concerning the Church, is, of their ſide, a mere continued piece of Shifts, and pitiful Evaſions, as will be evident to any one that ſhall conſider this Controverſy in the ſeveral parts and degrees of it. To begin with its firſt riſe, all the World knows, that the Point in debate at firſt, was only, whether what our Fathers called Errors and Superſtitions, were ſuch Errors and Superſtitions, as neceſſarily required a Reformation; and no Body can deny, that the ready and propereſt way of being ſatisfied herein, was to examine the things themſelves, and compare them with the Scriptures. Nevertheleſs, theſe Gentlemen not apprehending themſelves very ſecure, if this method were taken, would needs diſcover another, and to have this done the more effectually, wiſely agreed to maintain, that this Deciſion ought to depend upon their own Judgment, and that all

all muſt be ſubmitted to their Diſcretion and Authority. By this means they engaged us in an enquiry, whether the Pope of *Rome* and his Clergy really are, or ought to be the Supreme Judges in their own Cauſe; or to ſay more truly, whether they be the abſolute Umpires of Chriſtian Religion, and Maſters over the Conſciences of all Men whatſoever? This was evidently one Evaſion already, for 'tis declining the main Point in diſpute. But ſeeing it's impoſſible for theſe Pretentions of the Pope and his Clergy to take place, if men were allowed without more ado, to conſult ſound Reaſon and Scripture in the caſe; theſe Gentlemen, who never are deſirous to bring things to a ſhort iſſue, have invented another expedient, to entangle us in intricate Queſtions concerning the Church, where a great many indirect Circumſtances might eaſily be ſtarted, and the Simplicity of men impoſed upon by Equivocal terms. So that now we are entred upon this Controverſy about the Church, where the firſt thing to be done, is to know what the true Church of Chriſt is, and form to our ſelves ſo exact an Idea of it, as may not lead us into miſtakes. I confeſs, if men would but ſtick to what might be learnt from Scripture, and ſound Reaſon in the matter, there might be ways found for an Agreement very eaſily; but inſtead of doing ſo, theſe Gentlemen here make another double. They cry out, that we muſt not make an Inviſible Church of it, and that to compoſe it all of good Men, and true Believers, would be to make it Inviſible; ſo that now they bring us into a conteſt about the Churches Inviſibility. And in truth, if they would but ſtop here, and hold to it; we ſhould know what we have to truſt to, and preſently diſcuſs this Queſtion with them fairly, Whether a man may not truly ſay in ſome ſenſe, that the Church is inviſible? But while we are big with this Expectation, and hope for a Concluſion here, they put the change upon us a fourth time; for inſtead of going about to ſhew, that the Church is not inviſible, they preſently undertake to prove that ſhe is viſible; as if it were impoſſible for the ſame thing to be viſible, and inviſible in divers Reſpects. In one word, theſe Gentlemen manifeſtly play with us, they make us skip from one branch of the queſtion to another; they carry us about from one place to another, juſt as they have a mind, with abundance of Wit and Cunning, 'tis true, but very little of that Sincerity and upright Temper, that enquires after Truth, and would be glad to find it.

This is very near the method which M. *de Meaux* hath been forced to follow in this diſpute; for indeed there is a neceſſity, that the form ſhould be adapted to the Capacity of the matter. Of this we have ſeen ſeveral very palpable Inſtances in the foregoing Reflections; but this Eleventh,

venth, which we are now taking into Examination, gives us one at the firſt view, which well deſerves our Obſervation. The thing is this, M. *de Meaux* having in his Inſtruction to *Mademoiſelle de Duras*, undertaken to prove the Churches Viſibility at the ſame rate that other Diſputants of that Church uſe to do, by the Acceptation of the word, among *Pagans*, among *Jews*, and even in our own Diſcipline, and Confeſſion of Faith, and by ſome paſſages of Scripture; I thought it neceſſary, in order to expoſing the Vanity of theſe Arguments, to give a clear Explanation of the Proteſtants Opinion, as to the Viſibility and Inviſibility of that part of the Church at preſent upon Earth. This was the deſign of my third enquiry, as you have already ſeen, wherein I advanced theſe two Truths. The one, that M. *de Meaux* was miſtaken in ſuppoſing, we denied the Church at preſent upon Earth to be Viſible, and conſequently, that it was but loſt time for him to prove a thing, that was never brought into queſtion by us. The other, that he was as much miſtaken, in fancying there could be no viſible Church, unleſs it were compoſed of good and bad Men, of elect and reprobate Perſons promiſcuouſly. Nothing could poſſibly be imagined more direct and pertinent to the Point, than this, becauſe it was perfectly to evacuate at one ſtroke, all the pretended Arguments in his Inſtruction, and at the ſame time to lay plainly before him the very pinch of the queſtion, to which he ought to have applied himſelf; it was to ſhew, that he had taken a great deal of pains, where there was no need of pains; and that he had ſpared himſelf, where in truth he ought not to have done it. What now could be expected from M. *de Meaux* upon this occaſion? One would think he were obliged, either frankly to acknowledg his miſtake, and that he had taken a wrong way for the inſtructing his Proſelite; or elſe to defend his Arguments, and oppoſe the two things objected againſt them. In all probability, there was but one of theſe two things to be done, he muſt either confeſs, It is true, I did not ſufficiently conſider the matter, when I ſet about the proof of a thing never diſputed by either of us, and ſuppoſed another, as taking it for a granted and acknowledged Truth, tho it were always controverted; or, if he would not be brought to this Confeſſion, he ought at leaſt to have proſecuted the diſpute, and in doing ſo, to have ſhewn on one hand, that the Proteſtants do not really acknowledg the Churches Viſibility; and on the other, that they are agreed upon this Principle, that there is no other Viſible Church, but what conſiſts of good and bad Men both; for theſe were the two things I offered againſt him. But inſtead of this, M. *de Meaux*, who thought it beſt to perplex the Matter as little as he could, has found out a third way, which is to make what I

ſaid

ſaid in my own Vindication, look like a Confeſſion which I had made to him of ſome very weighty Points, and as ſome mighty advantage which happened to him before he was aware, and a great many other pleaſant Characters which may be put upon it. This is the Buſineſs of his Eleventh Reflection.

I confeſs, this is an ingenious turn; for by it, all occaſions ceaſe of mentioning the twofold Surpriſe put upon *Mademoiſelle de Duras*; the one in making her believe that the Proteſtants deny what they do not; and the other, in proving what he needed not to prove, and in ſuppoſing what he ought not to ſuppoſe. All this ſeems perfectly concealed by the expedient. But how ingenious ſoever it may be, ſtill I muſt ſay, That what he would have appear to be a Confeſſion of mine, is in truth no more, than a very natural and faithful Declaration that I have made of the common Opinion of Proteſtants, which he pretended not to know. 'Tis to no purpoſe, that he would inſinuate, *Mr.* Claude *ſpeaks of the Church after a manner new in the pretended Reformation.* I have told him nothing, but what all of us believe, and all of us teach; and if he queſtion whether we do or no, he need only read ſuch of our Authors, as have made it their buſineſs to treat particularly on this Subject, ſuch as *Calvin*, *Zuinglius*, *Muſculus*, *Melanchon*, *Whitaker*, *Daneus*, *Cameron*, *Du Pleſſis*, *Altodius*, *Rivet*, *Meſtrezzat*, and the reſt; he need only read ſuch of his own Authors, as have related the Proteſtants Opinions, as *Bellarmin*, *Stapleton*, *Du Perron*, and Cardinal *Richelieu* himſelf; for, tho theſe for the moſt part relate their Adverſaries Opinions very immethodically and unſincerely; yet, ſtill they ſay enough to juſtifie what I have advanced in the Point. Eng. Refl. p. 99.

Indeed all true Proteſtants believe as I do, that the true Church, that I mean, which is ſo, not only in Men's but in God's Eyes, conſiſts of true Believers, and that the Wicked, the Unrighteous and Reprobates, have no part in this bleſſed Communion, which is the Communion of Saints only. All true Proteſtants believe as I do, that almoſt infinite numbers of theſe worldly Men, who do not properly belong to the true Church, do yet ſtill conceal themſelves under the veil of Hypocriſy, and herd among the true Believers, and ſo diſſembling what their Condition really is, appear with others in the ſame publick Aſſemblies, receive the ſame Sacraments with them, and are called as they are, without any diſtinction, to Miniſterial Offices; ſo that the good Corn continues ſtill mingled with the Chaff, and the Tares with the Wheat. All true Proteſtants own as I do, that for the diſcovering this true Church thus mingled with wicked Men, and the diſtinguiſhing her from other Societies, that put in their claims to this Title; there

are certain Characters and Signs, that do put a difference between her and them, and make it very feisible for those that seek sincerely, and heartily desire to find her, to know her from those others. All true Protestants acknowledg with me, that two several Judgments and Notions may be past upon this Exterior Society, which contains good and bad Men promiscuously; The one a Judgment of *Charity*, which descends not to any particular Distinctions, but takes it for granted, that every thing is what it appears to be; The other a Judgment of *Reflection*, that distinguishes two sorts of Men in that Society, true and counterfeit Believers; and that these two different Notions, give occasion for Mens expressing themselves two different ways, sometimes attributing the name of Church to this whole Body without any Distinction; and at other times restraining it to the true Believers only, in this mixture of Hypocrites. All true Protestants will say as I do, That not only this whole Body, to which the confused Ideas of Charity allow the name of Church, is visible in its Assemblies, when it is in a condition to hold and celebrate them; but likewise, that the Body of true Believers, to which the Judgment of Reflection confines the name of Church, is so, by the same Assemblies, and the exercise of the Ministry; visible *indistinctly* indeed, but yet so far visible, that a man may with certainty affirm, there are true Believers among those Professors, and consequently, the true Church of Jesus Christ among them. All true Protestants in acknowledging the same Church to be thus Visible, do also at the same time acknowledg with me, that it is in the Eyes of Men invisible, if we speak of a *certain* and *distinct* Visibility, which should extend to the distinguishing particular persons, and enable us to affirm with certainty, that such and such Men are true Believers. For, besides that true Faith is a thing within the Man, and consequently cannot be the proper and immediate Object of our bodily Sight; it hath scarcely any distinguishing Characters, but what Hypocrisy may counterfeit, and consequently may become equivocal and deceitful Signs to us.

You see now how far Protestants go, when they speak of the Church in its natural and ordinary condition. This is what they all say, and acknowledg in the case; But they do not stop here neither. For, as they know that the Body of a Man falls sometimes into great weaknesses and distempers, that break the regular course of nature, and mightily disturb the order of its functions; so are they sensible too, that the Church is liable to some accidents, that may disorder her natural state, and sometimes reduce her to great extremities. Now these accidents, which may very fitly be termed the distempers of the Church, proceed chiefly

chiefly from two Causes; sometimes from the open impetuosity and violence of the declared enemies of the Gospel, who raise such strong persecutions against her, that she is quite deprived of all liberty to hold any publick Assemblies, or openly exercise her Ministry. At such a time it must be confest, that she is as it were under an Eclipse; for in the same proportion that she loses this liberty of Assembling her Members, and exercising her Ministry publickly, so much of her visibility she loses with it. Not that she is left utterly destitute of all witness in these perillous and troublesome times, because her very Martyrs and Confessors give abundant testimony to her. But the attempts that are made for her destruction, the calumnies they load her with, and the scattering her Members up and down the World, do darken her in such a manner, that she cannot without much difficulty be discerned. However, thus much at least is plain, that she loses the visibility of her Assemblies, and of the Exercise of her Ministry.

The other Cause, from whence these distempers happen to the Church, are those very worldlings and hypocrites that are intermixed in the same outward profession with true believers. It sometimes falls out, that these men grow to such a prodigious multitude, that the face of the Church is quite disfigured with them, and at such times all things run to disorder and confusion, not only in respect of good morals, but of Doctrines, Worship, and other Rites and Customs. Errors, Superstitions, and False-worship, spread themselves all over, and the Ministry it self, being then got into wicked and unworthy hands, runs counter to what it was naturally designed for, and becomes the very receptacle and fountain of corruption.

When things are brought to this pass, the Church is not extinct, God forbid, the Gates of Hell shall never prevail against her. But she is in part hid under the thick cloud of Superstitions, and hypocritical Christians, that cover and surround her, as a little good Corn is almost quide hidden, when lying in the same floor with a heap of Chaff and refuse; I say, *in part*, because as in times of the most violent persecutions, the Church hath still her Martyrs, that make her known; so hath she, when oppress and overpowred with counterfeit Christians, her *strong* and *renowned ones*, such as St. *Augustin* calls *the Stars of the Firmament*, which make her light shine forth, while *the Sand of the Sea shore*, that is, according to his interpretation, the weak and fearful remain covered with the tempestuous waves. This is what the Protestants call a time of the Churches Invisibility, not that they think she was ever so totally eclipsed, as absolutely to lose the visibility of her Characters; but because in those melancholly and afflicted times, her Characters are

ſo obſcured, that they can ſcarcely be known, whereas at other times they are very eaſily diſcerned. Neither do the Proteſtants think, that, how groſly ſoever the body of the Miniſtry may have been corrupted, the lawful uſe of it was ever utterly, and in all reſpects, aboliſhed: They are very well ſatisfied, that if this ſhould fall out at any one time, the Church could not be kept up any longer; but they do acknowledg that this did never actually come to paſs in the Chriſtian World.

In a corrupted Miniſtry they put a difference betwixt the good part of it, and the bad part; betwixt the light and the darkneſs; and they are of opinion, that God, by his wiſe Providence hath continually tempered the mixture of good and evil in ſuch a manner, that all the while the Miniſtry continued in the hands of falſe Labourers, there was ever reſerved ſuch a proportion of good, as was ſufficient for the Salvation of his Children; and that, when thoſe falſe Labourers had brought things to ſuch a paſs, that it was no longer poſſible for men to be ſafe under their conduct; God called other perſons to the Miniſtry, to exerciſe and diſcharge it to edification. Thus, if we ſpeak with reference to the Miniſtry it ſelf, the Church did never entirely and abſolutely ceaſe to be viſible in this reſpect. Thoſe who are deſirous to ſee this ſubject treated of more at large, may pleaſe to peruſe what I have written upon that occaſion, in my *Defence of the Reformation*, Part 1. Ch. 6. and Part 3d. ch. 5. and Part 4. ch. 1, 2. Theſe are the Propoſitions which we have granted, and do ſtill grant M. *de Meaux*; we ſhall ſee preſently what advantage he pretends to make of them. In the mean time he muſt give me leave here to preſent him with ſome obſervations of my own.

Firſt then, I ſhall make bold to tell him, that whenever he ſhall think to enter into this Controverſy againſt us hereafter, he ought to ſuppoſe, that we do acknowledg the Church to have a certain ſort of viſibility; becauſe indeed we do acknowledg ſo much, and *Bellarmin* himſelf hath owned that we do. * *The* Lutherans *and* Calviniſts, ſays he, *do fix open ſome certain exterior and viſible marks of the Church, ſuch as the Preaching of God's word, and Adminiſtration of the Sacraments; and it is their conſtant Doctrine, That whereſoever theſe marks are found, there is the true Church of Jeſus Chriſt.* If M. *de Meaux* do not think the viſibility we allow to be ſufficient, but his meaning be, that the condition of the Church upon Earth requires another of a different kind, one that may reſemble that of the People of *Rome*, and the Republick of *Venice*, as the ſame *Bellarmin* ſpeaks, he may argue that point as he ſhall ſee convenient; but ſtill he muſt ſuppoſe all along, as we find *Bellarmin* does, and as in Truth and Equity he is obliged, that the Proteſtants do not abſolutely deny the Churches Viſibility; and by the ſame rule he will be likewiſe obliged to

* See this paſſage quoted before out of *Bellarm. de Eccleſia*, Lib 3 Cap. 10. In the Anſwer to M. *de Meaux* his 9th Reflection.

to condemn all that first part of his Instruction to *Mademoiselle de Duras*, the whole business whereof is, to prove this Visibility, that is in plain terms, to prove a thing that no body ever denied or called in question.

I shall take the freedom to acquaint him in the second place, That whenever he shall undertake a dispute with us concerning the *Invisibility* of the Church, he must do it with some Distinction, and not confound an Invisibility, which we think cannot be separated from the Church, while continuing here upon Earth, with another sort of Invisibility, that is only accidental to it, and never happens but at some particular times. The first is what I took notice of, when discourling of the Churches natural and ordinary Condition, and comes to concern it by reason of the internal form of the Members composing it, that is, true Faith, and undissembled Piety, which none but God alone can attain to a certain knowledg of. But the second is such a one as I mentioned, when speaking of the Churches being sometimes oppress, and over-run with counterfeit Christians, and superstitious People. The former necessarily follows from Hypocrites and Worldlings being mixt with true Believers in the same external Communion, from whence the Characters of true Faith become equivocal and doubtful. But the second arises from the Extravagances of those Hypocrites and Worldlings, when they endeavour to fill Religion with their Errors, and exorbitant Opinions. The first makes the Church not to be visible distinctly, but leaves it still an indistinct Visibility; my meaning is, it hinders us from discerning easily and certainly, what particular Persons are true Believers; but it does not hinder us from an obvious and certain knowledg, that there are some true Believers in it. But the second hinders even this indistinct Visibility of the Church, for it hinders its appearing clearly, and maks it hard for Men to judg, whether there be any true Believers in such a Society or no. From the first of these, we infer a necessity of examining Decisions, affirming, that we ought therefore to examine, because no Man can be sure that they are the Decisions of the true Church. The use we make of the second, is from thence to infer the necessity of our Reformation, affirming, that because Religion was manifestly changed, and overgrown with Superstitions and Errors, that the Ministry was corrupted, and the exterior State of the Church disordered and confused, it was consequently Mens duty to reform themselves. Unless this Destinction be first made, or at least supposed to be made by us, there is no help for it, but Men must dispute impertinently, and run every minute into false Conclusions.

M. *de*

M. *de Meaux* muſt alſo be content that I ſhould tell him, He muſt not confound what we ſay of the Church, conſidered in her ordinary and natural State, with what we ſay of it, when conſidered in a weak and ſick Condition; nor deduce any Conſequences from one of theſe to the other. In my Opinion, this is a very reaſonable Diſtinction; for we ſpeak of a Man in a ſound and healtful temper of Body, quite otherwiſe than we do, when looking upon him, as in a ſickly Condition; and of a Kingdom when in peaceable and proſperous Circumſtances, quite otherwiſe, than when embroiled in Factions and Tumults. Thus it is with the Church, ſhe is not always in the ſame poſture. Sometimes the outward appearance ſhe makes, is all beautiful and commendable; but there are ſome other times when ſhe is clouded too; ſometimes her publick Worſhip is in all Points edifying; but at others it is mixt and unſincere; ſometimes the Waters of her Miniſtry (if I may uſe ſo bold a Metaphor) flow clear and pure; but at other times they are loaded with Mud and Dirt. According to theſe different Conditions, our Expreſſions differ concerning her; we ſay things of her, conſidered in one reſpect, which are not by any means applicable to her in another; ſo that what is ſaid upon this Subject, muſt never be ſtretcht beyond its due bounds. Nevertheleſs, this is the very Rock that M. *de Meaux* hath ſplit upon in this Eleventh Reflection. For having taken notice of ſome Paſſages in my third Enquiry, which were ſpoken of the Church, with reference to her natural and ordinary State; he hath all along underſtood them, as ſpoken in an abſolute and unlimited Senſe; and drawn inferences from thence, as he thought moſt for his purpoſe, by adding to them ſome terms that are purely his Comment, and no part of my Original at all. For inſtance, looking upon the Church in this natural State, I had delivered my Opinion, that the Church was Viſible, when mixed with Hypocrites, in ſuch a manner, as good Corn was, when growing in the ſame Field with Tares; and this was ſufficient to prove the true Church viſible. *I hear this with Joy*, ſays M. *de Meaux*, *aſſuredly we ſhall advance*; *Mr.* Claude *gives it us already for manifeſt, that there ſhall be always a viſible Body of which one may ſay, there are true Believers.* Here is an *always*, purely of his own Addition already. I had likewiſe ſaid in that writing, That the viſible Church is that Body of Jeſus Chriſt, for the edifying whereof St. *Paul* ſays, God hath ſet ſome Apoſtles, and ſome Prophets, *&c. I continue to read his Anſwer*, proceeds M. *de Meaux*, *and I find that he blames me for imputing to the pretended Reformed, that they believe not the Body in which Chriſt has placed, according to St.* Paul, *ſome Apoſtles, ſome Teachers, ſome Paſtors, and the reſt to be the Church of Jeſus Chriſt. How glad am I to be reproved, provided we advance! It is then manifeſt,*

Eng. Refl. page 100.

Eng. Refl. Ibid.

feſt, that the Body of Jeſus Chriſt which is his Church, ſhall always be compoſed of Paſtors, of Teachers, of Preachers, and alſo of People: It is then conſequently always very Viſible, and the Succeſſion of the Paſtors, as well as that of the People, ought to be manifeſt in it. If a man need do no more, to make M. *de Meaux* thus exceeding joyful, but only grant that the Church is always Viſible upon Earth, more or leſs, according to the different Circumſtances ſhe is in; Viſible, even by the conſtant exerciſe of her Miniſtry, tho that Miniſtry may ſometimes happen to be wretchedly corrupted; he will have no reaſon at all to complain of us, and we ſhall very heartily contribute to the keeping him in this pleaſant humour. But he ought not in order to deducing this Conſequence, to ſerve himſelf of paſſages that contain no ſuch thing; he ought not to wreſt the ſenſe of Words, nor add of his own Head ſuch terms as theſe, *Always*, very *Viſible* and *Manifeſt*, that he never found there, nor can be inſerted without utterly ſpoiling the form of my Argument; nor ought he to transfer what was ſpoken of the Church in its ſound and regular State, to times of Confuſion and Diſorder.

Perhaps too it may not be amiſs, to give M. *de Meaux* an intimation, That when men deſign to take an advantage of any Propoſition which they pretend their Adverſary hath acknowledged, his ſenſe ought to be taken perfect and entire, without any defalcations, or balking any eſſential part of it. Now this is a Rule that M. *de Meaux* hath not kept to, how reaſonable ſoever it be allowed in it ſelf; and I will produce you here a very conſiderable inſtance of his not doing it. I grant an uninterrupted continuance of the Miniſtry in the Church; but I grant it with this proviſo, that this Miniſtry may happen to be ſometimes prodigiouſly corrupted, and God may permit many Errors to be introduced into it, and many Superſtitions, which may plainly take off from the Churches Viſibility. Now M. *de Meaux*, inſtead of relating my ſenſe, as I my ſelf had deliver'd it, affirms on the contrary, that it concerned only perſonal immoralities. *But ſhall this Miniſtry*, ſays he, *laſt for ever ſo pure, that none but good people ſhall be admitted to it? We have ſeen*, adds he, *that Mr.* Claude *pretends it not. In effect there is no promiſe of this perpetual purity. The promiſe is, that whatſoever the manners of theſe Miniſters may be, Jeſus Chriſt will always Act, always Baptiſe, and always Teach with them, and the effect of this Miniſtry, tho mixt, ſhall be ſuch, that under its Authority the Church ſhall be always viſible.* Who, when he reads theſe words, would not preſently ſay, that, provided Mr. *Claude*'s Adverſary were but agreed, that the manners of the Miniſters are not always pure and free from ſcandal, he deſires no more, but grants all the reſt readily? But this is by no means fair dealing, the immoralities of the Miniſters, Eng. Reſl. pag. 102.

ſters, are not the buſineſs he diſcourſes of, but the corruption of Doctrine and of Worſhip, which gave occaſion for the Reformation. M. *de Meaux* can never acquit himſelf of indirect dealing in this particular.

Laſtly, M. *de Meaux* muſt allow me to tell him, that in a controverſy of ſuch high concernment as this, it is not at all ſatisfactory to judicious and intelligent perſons, for whom our writings ſhould be principally deſigned, for a Man to put his Adverſaries hypotheſis into the form of an acknowledgment or conceſſion, and then pretend to take advantage from thence, and ſtart ſome little objections againſt it. I grant this method is allowable in diſputing, provided it be uſed regularly; but then it is manifeſt withal, that unleſs the advantages pretended to be made of this, be very clear and deciſive, ſomething more muſt be done, and one of theſe two courſes taken; either to examine what can be denied in their Principles, or to ſee what will bear a diſpute in their Conſequences, and accordingly argue againſt them. For, if the Principles be ſound and good, and the Conſequences from them well inferred, ſtrong and directly to the point, you may raiſe Objections, and pretend to gain here and there a little ground, as long as you will, but ſtill the main work will hold; and after all your pains, thoſe that underſtand, and can judge, will ſay, you do but pick holes to no purpoſe. We deſire M. *de Meaux* therefore, that he would pleaſe to examine, whether there be any thing in the ſeveral Propoſitions of which the Proteſtants opinions conſiſt, conſidered as they have all along been repreſented to him hitherto, either falſe in it ſelf, or incongruous in the Connexion; or whether the Conſequences deduced from them, ſuch as he hath already ſeen in my Writing, he either irrational in the deduction, or inſufficient and weak in themſelves; and to ſhew us wherein, and why they are ſo. For as to the advantages he pretends to make of what he ſays I granted him, we hope to make it appear, how vain they are, when we come to examine his thirteenth Reflection.

In the mean time, he muſt give us leave to remember, what out of his great Equity, and Chriſtian Charity, he hath been pleaſed to grant us in this. *Let us not call*, ſays he, *if they will, by the Name of the Church, all that Exterior Profeſſion; let us abſtain from this name, ſince Mr.* Claude *is againſt it; and like true reaſonable and peaceable Chriſtians, let us endeavour to agree on the thing.* Not doubting now, but M. *de Meaux* ſpeaks ſincerely, and that he will be very well content to hold to this expedient of his own propounding, I do not really at all deſpair, but that we may by this means be brought to an Agreement in the main. Let us ſuppoſe then, for a thing no longer to be queſtioned between M. *de Meaux* and me,

Eng. Reflect. p. 103.

me, that the name of Jesus Christ's true Church, is not to be given to all this *Exterior Profession*, but only to those of it who are true Believers; a Man then must be very defective in his understanding, not to perceive it very possible, and a thing which may easily and commonly happen, that Hypocrites and counterfeit Christians should get a majority in the Ecclesiastical Assemblies, and so carry all that is decided in them; and if this should be denied, it were the easiest thing in the world to prove it, and convince an Adversary, that it may happen so. Now from hence it follows, that in such a Case these would not be the decisions of the true Church, but of the pretended and counterfeit one, and consequently, that an Examination is absolutely necessary to give men full satisfaction in this point, and prevent their mistaking one for another. But now, if this Principle be once supposed, a second Inference will very easily be drawn from it, which is, that it may very well so fall out, that these hypocrites and counterfeit Christians, who are not really Jesus Christ's true Church, nor actuated by any other spirit but that of the World, may fill this Exterior Profession with Errors and Superstitions, and in such a Case, a Reformation would become absolutely and indispensably necessary. If once M. *de Meaux* and I come to an agreement upon either of these two Consequences, or the particulars from which they were derived, all that remains in Controversy between us will meet with a very speedy solution.

M. de Meaux's *Twelfth Reflection Examined, concerning what he calls Mr.* Claude's *Objections.*

WHat M. *de Meaux* calls my Objections here, are not properly mine, but answers to some that were started by himself. However I will at present allow them what name he pleases, reserving to my self still a right of rectifying, and discoursing of their nature more exactly, when there shall be any occasion for doing so.

The first of them he lays before us in these words, *Mr.* Claude *objects to me, that I desire in vain to establish my Society, composed of Good and Bad, and its Eternal duration, on these inviolable Promises of Jesus Christ, Thou art Peter, and I am always with you. 'Tis not, says he, of the wicked, that it can be said, Hell shall not prevail against them. 'Tis not with wicked men and Hypocrites, that Jesus Christ hath promised always to be, and these Promises respect none but true Believers.* M. *de Meaux* had applied the Promises of the Gospel to this Exterior Society, composed of Good and Bad, as supposing Eng. Refl. p. 104.

posing them to be Jesus Christ's true Church; and to this I had replied, That those Promises could not respect any persons besides the true Believers only; because those True Believers were that very true Church to which Jesus Christ had made these Promises. Our present business is to enquire, whether this be a sufficient and well-grounded Answer.

Eng. Refl. Ibid. *Let us add*, says M. *de Meaux*, *according to Mr.* Claude's *Principles, that if these Promises respect only true Believers, they respect them at least in this Ministry, and in this Exterior Profession, and the Objection will be at the same time resolved. For in fine, if the true Believers ought to be always shown, and always visible, according to Mr.* Claude, *in this Exterior Profession, in which the good are mixt with the bad; it follows that this composition, by what name soever it is called, shall always appear on the Earth. Now none can be assured of a Society's subsisting always, and always in a visible state, unless God hath promised it. His Promises regard then even this mixture, and not only the true Believers, but with them all the Society, in which they ought, according to his Decrees, always to appear. By Consequence we must understand these Promises of Jesus Christ otherwise than Mr.* Claude *teaches.*

I am very sorry that a desire to support a bad Cause, should engage M. *de Meaux* in little subtilties, very unbecoming a Man of his parts and understanding. At the rate he argues here, it might be said too, that the Promise made by God to *Abraham*, That he would preserve his Seed under their slavery in *Egypt*, respected the *Egyptians* themselves also, because it was under their unjust Tyranny that the People of God should subsist. By the same Rule we might as well say, that Jesus Christ's Promise made to his Church, *of the Gates of Hell never prevailing against her*, respects Hell it self, and the Gates of it, because the Church must subsist among those conflicts which Hell shall put her upon. We should say too, that the Promise made to God's Elect, that they should be more than Conquerors over Persecution, and Distress, and Famine,

Rom. 7. 34, 36. and Peril, and Sword, as St. *Paul* assures us they shall, does likewise concern these dreadful temptations, because without them they could never become Conquerors. We must by the same reason say, that God's Promises of pardoning his Children their sins, as oft as they shall flee for sanctuary to his mercy and favour, regards those very sins they commit, because it is impossible God should pardon them, if they had not first committed them. M. *de Meaux* does not attend to this. There are several things which the Promises of God do, and must of necessity suppose, which yet must by no means be looked upon as things concerned, or having any part in those Promises, because their nature and quality are utterly repugnant to it. God Promises his peo-

Isa. 43. 2. ple in *Isaiah*, *When they pass through the waters, the waters shall not overflow them,*

them, and when they walk through the fire, they shall not be burnt; this necessarily implies, that there shall be both water and fire; but we cannot from thence infer, that God promises those waters, or that fire. God had in the *Old Testrment* promised, that the *Messiah should break the Serpents head, that he should be ruler in the midst of his enemies, and smite the heads over divers Countries*; this supposes a Serpent, and Enemies, and Heads that should oppose him; but it cannot be inferred from thence, that God had promised this Serpent, or those Enemies and opposers. The Case is directly the same here, God promises to preserve, and continue his true Believers unto the end of the World, in this mixture of hypocrites and wicked men; and to continue them too under a corrupt Ministry; this indeed supposes, that there shall be wicked men and hypocrites, and a Ministry liable to corruptions; but the meaning of it can never be, that God promises the constant continuance of hypocrites and wicked men, or that a corrupt Ministry should last for ever. If there be hypocrites and wicked men at all times, if the corruption of the Ministry do last a great while, all this must be attributed, not to any virtue of God's Promise, but to another sort of Causes, of a Nature very different from any Promise of his.

Gen. 3. Psal. 110.

What M. *de Meaux* urges, That *When God promised the* Israelites *plentiful Harvests, with the Corn he promised also the Chaff; and to preserve the Harvest, is to preserve the Chaff with the Corn*, signifies nothing at all. There is a vast difference between these two things. The Chaff is a means naturally and necessarily required, and designed for the production and preservation of the Corn, whence it comes to pass, that in promising the Corn, the * Chaff too is promised with it; because he that promises the End, does certainly engage to give all the natural and necessary means conducing to that End. But the mixture of wicked men with good, and the corruption of the Ministry, are so far from being any means, naturally designed for the Churches preservation, that, on the contrary, they tend directly to their ruine and destruction, because these very things are contained and implied in those Gates of Hell that wage war with her. We must say of them therefore, that their continuance is not by virtue of the Promise, but that, supposing them to subsist from some other Principle, God promises to assist his Church against them, and to prevent her being utterly ruined by their efforts against her.

Eng. Refl. pag. 161.

* I have here all along translated *paille* by *Chaff*, because I would keep as near as I could to the word in M. *de Meaux*'s English Reflections; but it seems in some of the following passages rather to require such a rendring, as the straw, or husk of the Corn.

Eng. Refl. Page 105. *But*, says M. *de Meaux*, *The wicked also in the Church are for the Just, as the Chaff in the Harvest is for the Corn; and as God promises not the Chaff, either alone, or for it self; so he promises not the wicked, either alone, or for themselves. But nevertheless, all this Composition shall subsist in virtue of the Divine Promise, till the last Separation, when the wicked, as the Chaff, shall be cast into the fire that shall never be quencht. In the mean time Jesus Christ shall be always with the whole Composition.*

It is not true, that the wicked are for the just, in such a manner as the Chaff in the Harvest is for the Corn; This assertion can never be made good, and would be liable to several very pernicious Consequences. If the wicked were for the just, as the Chaff is for the Corn, then must they of necessity be at the first intended by God, in order to composing the Church, as the Chaff is at first intended by Nature, in order to producing the Harvest. Now this can never be affirmed, and M. *de Meaux* hath already forgot, that he himself acknowledged in the foregoing Reflection, That *without doubt, 'tis not Jesus Christ's first intent, there should be Ministers that are deceivers; this happens only through the malice of the Enemy. The* * *distinction of the Ministry is for true Believers; Jesus Christ did not establish it to call into the Church deceivers and hypocrites.* And yet we should be forced to own that he did, if the Wicked were for the Just, as the Chaff is for the Corn. God produced the Earth for the production of the Chaff, that by means of this Chaff it might produce the Harvest; to make the Comparison equal, Jesus Christ must have ordained the Ministry, for the calling into it Lying and Deceitful Ministers, that so by them he might bring about the Conversion of the Just. These Wicked persons, as I have argued already, must then needs have been a means that hath a natural tendency of it self to such a production and preservation of the Just, as the Chaff hath a tendency to the production and preservation of the Corn. Now this no man can say, if he will speak consistently either with Religion, or sound sense. Thus all that M. *de Meaux* hath built upon a slippery and false foundation, totters, and cannot stand.

Eng. Reflect. p. 101. *It should be destination.

If he could have satisfied himself with affirming, that God hath promised by the wisdom of his good providence, which brings good out of evil, to change the natural use of hypocrites and wicked men, and make even these sometimes, contrary to any intention of their own, instrumental to the Salvation of his dear Children; could he have been but content to say, that God hath promised by the same wise and good providence, to stop the growth of Corruption, when it hath got ground in the Ministry, and not suffer it to proceed to such a degree, as shall make the Salvation of his Children impossible to be obtained; or that,

that, if he did give way to this, he would provide some other means for his Churches subsistence, and the Ministries too; he would have said nothing but what we should have concurred with him in the confession of, and what is really true. But to assert, as he does, that God promises the wicked, and that the subsistence of the unjust and impostors, depends upon the strength of that Divine Promise, as that of the Chaff or Straw does upon the promise of the Harvest, is, as far as I am able to judge of it, a sort of Theology, that cannot meet with many abettors.

Further yet; Besides, That this Doctrine is false in it self, I aver, that it is of no advantage at all to M. *de Meaux.* Tho we should suppose, as he would have us, that this Composition of good and bad Men, this exterior Profession, as he phrases it, will for ever subsist upon Earth, by Virtue of Gods Promises, and that it will always continue Visible too, by a Ministry in the hands, sometimes of good, and sometimes of corrupt Ministers; yet how would this be any security to us, that the wicked should not add their own Errors and false Worship, to the outward Profession they make of the Gospel? Which way could this prevent false Labourers, that sometimes get possest of the Ministry, from mixing their own erroneous Opinions with the sound Doctrine they teach, and levening it with their own Superstitions? Might not the true Church subsist still for some time in this Composition, tho with a great deal of difficulty, as Men subsist in times of Oppression and Calamity? Might not she be in some degree Visible for all this too, tho sometimes obscurely, and as it were under a Cloud? And when the wicked should carry on their Oppression to such an Extremity, as threatens the Church with utter Ruin and Extinction; might not God notwithstanding all this, restore to her, her former Visibility, by reforming the Ministry in this very Composition, as well in regard of the Persons themselves, as their Doctrines, Worship and Discipline? Can M. *de Meaux* pretend, that, supposing God had really promised to preserve this Composition to the end of the World, the meaning of this could be, that a great, nay the greatest part might not fall off, and that the most beautiful, pure and visible Part, would not still be the same Composition, as before that falling off? This Composition extended heretofore over the *Eastern*, *Western* and *Southern* parts of the World; how many such fallings off happened then, into how many parcels was this Body divided? Some one of all these there is, that can say, It is the same Composition as formerly; because otherwise, the Promises of God would not have been accomplished. In order, therefore, to its being still the same Composition, there is no necessity it should be exactly of the same extent,

nor

nor retain the same exterior Form, nor appear just in the same Features and Lineaments; had this been requisite, this Composition had disappeared, and consequently the true Church ceased upon Earth long ago. What then is necessary to warrant its being called still the same Composition? M. *de Meaux* hath taught us in his ninth Reflection, *The Elect*, says he, that is, the true Believers, *are Essential to the Church.* If there were none of these left, it would cease to be the same Composition; so long as there are any, it continues still the same. Let M. *de Meaux* then ground the Subsistence upon what he pleases, the strength of Gods Promise, or any thing else, this will do him no Service; because still, when there shall happen a Separation, the Part in which we can affirm that true Believers remain, must be lookt upon as the part, in which the Composition subsists; tho the less considerable for Number, tho deserted by the greatest part of the Ministers, tho there be some Alterations made by it in Doctrine, in Discipline and Worship, as it was in the case of the Reformation; and by the Rule of Contraries, the other part, which we cannot affirm the same thing of, that is, that the Elect and true Believers continue in it, must only be considered as a Part fallen off, and cut away from this Composition, and no better. Thus both the Parts are Visible, but one of them wants what M. *de Meaux* hath declared to be *Essential* to the Church, and the other hath it. Thus the whole matter depends upon an Enquiry, where the true Believers are. The true Faith Answers that Question; The Elect are Essential to this Composition, M. *de Meaux* hath determined them so to be; this then must be sought for, where these Believers may be found, and no where else.

Eng. Refl. p. 92, 93, 94.

Afterwards M. *de Meaux* descends to another Objection, which he pretends I put to him,

Eng. Refl. p. 105. *He Objects to me*, says he, *that in defining the Catholick Church mentioned in the Creed, I speak only of the Church which is actually on Earth, instead of comprehending in it all the Elect, which have been, are, and shall be, and in fine with the Holy Angels, all the Heavenly Jerusalem. I have already answered him, that I neither would, nor was obliged to define the Church, but in relation to our Subject, and her Visibility.*

I never objected any thing of all this to M. *de Meaux*, but, in regard he had charged the Protestants with misunderstanding that Article of the Creed, I explained their opinion of it, and said as much to confirm it, as I thought was needful for their justification. Besides, I did not take the Angels into my Idea of the Catholick Church, but only said, that St. *Augustin* had taken them into his; and I said moreover, that in *this he went beyond us*, which is quite contrary to what M. *de Meaux* makes us say.

ſay. And for what he either would, or was obliged to do, when he defined the Church, I have told him my thoughts ſufficiently already, in my Examination of his Ninth Reflection.

But, ſays he, *I add, that according to Mr.* Claude's *own Principles, I ſaid all; for, according to him, in the Exterior Profeſſion, that is, in what renders the Church viſible, may be markt the true Believers, with whom all the Saints, in what time and place ſoever they may be, not excepting the Holy Angels, are united.* Eng. Refl. Ibid.

I muſt needs own, that I do not perfectly conceive M. *de Meaux* his meaning in this place. Does he mean, that by reſtraining the term *Univerſal Church* to the Exterior Society at preſent upon Earth, a Man does at the ſame time comprehend the Church now in Heaven, and that part which is yet unborn too, upon this account, that the true Believers now in this Society, are united with all the Saints and Elect Children of God, in what time and place ſoever they may be? This is juſt as if I ſhould ſay, that when by this word, *the Univerſal Map*, I underſtand only the particular Map of *France*, I do nevertheleſs at the ſame time, include in the ſignification of this word, all the parts of the Earth, becauſe they are all united with *France*, and one another; or, as if I ſhould ſay, that underſtanding by this term, *The whole World*, one ſingle Star, I do yet comprehend in the ſignification of that term, all other Creatures whatever, becauſe the reſt of the Creatures, and this Star together, make up but one World. I fancy now, that the ſignification of a word when confined to ſome particular part, is not the ſame, as when it is extended to the whole of a thing. *But*, ſays he, *when I ſhall have found the true Believers actually preſent on Earth, I ſhall by the ſame means have found both that Church which is already in Heaven, and that which God will cauſe to grow up in all following Ages.* All this I grant. But this does not argue, that the ſignification of *Univerſal Church* muſt be reſtrained to that Exterior Society, which contains the true Believers, no more than it follows, that thoſe words, *The Kingdom of* France, muſt be reſtrained to the Town of *Orleans*, only upon a pretence, that when once you have found *Orleans*, you will have found the Kingdom of *France*. Eng. Refl. Pag. 106.

What he ſays afterwards, That *when under the name of the Catholick Church he underſtood the Church which is upon Earth, he ſpoke with all the Fathers, and with the Council of* Nice, *which calls it Apoſtolick*; ſeems more directly for his purpoſe. But, beſides that St. *Auguſtin*, who hath no reaſon to be excluded the number of the Fathers, hath taken this expreſſion in a more extenſive ſenſe, as hath been frequently ſaid before; beſides too, that this ſecond Anſwer is evacuated, and made uſeleſs by the

the former; because, if M. *de Meaux said all*, when he said *the Church that is upon Earth*, the Fathers will have said *all*, when they have said the *Apostolick Church*, and added to it, *toto Orbe diffusa, spread over the whole World*; not to insist upon this, I say, the business M. *de Meaux* and I are concerned for, is not properly to enquire whether it be ill done, by the *Catholick Church*, to understand the Church that is upon Earth; but whether interpreting that Article of our Creed which respects the Catholick Church, in a sense that shall comprise the whole Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, be to corrupt and deprave that Article, as ill as the *Arrians*, *Macedonians*, and *Socinians* do other parts of the Creed. For this is the purport of that heavy charge brought by M. *de Meaux* against the Protestants. *There is an Article of the Creed*, says he, *they believe not*; *which is*, *that of the Universal Church. 'Tis true, they say with the mouth, I believe the Catholick or Universal Church, as the* Arrians, Macedonians, *and* Socinians *say with the mouth, I believe in Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost. But as there is reason to accuse them of not believing these Articles, because they believe them not as they ought, nor according to their true sense; so if we shew the Pretended Reformed, that they believe not, as they ought, the Article of the Catholick Church, we may truly say, that in effect they reject so important an Article of the Creed.* This then is primarily and mainly to be lookt upon, not as one of my Objections, but as one of M. *de Meaux* his own. So that it signifies nothing at all to the purpose, to tell us, he hath taken the *Name of the Church* in the same meaning which the Fathers, and the Council of *Nice* put upon it; for it does not follow from thence, that that sense which the Protestants put upon it, concurring herein with St. *Augustin*, and the Council of *Trent* too, may not be the true; nor this is any such depravation of the Creed, as the *Arrians*, *Macedonians*, and *Socinians* were guilty of. This is a thing, that neither the Fathers, nor the *Nicene* Council ever taught him.

Meaux's Eng Conf. p. 2.

M. de

M. de Meaux's *Thirteenth Reflection examined, wherein he pretends to ſhew, that according to Mr.* Claude's *own Doctrine, there is no Salvation for* Proteſtants, *but in the* Roman-*Church.*

THIS Thirteenth Reflection, the very Title whereof, as is plain, leaves a Man in mighty expectation, does nevertheleſs contain nothing, but ſome very trivial Objections, ſuch as have been long ago urged againſt our Reformation, and already confuted over and over. I know very well, that ſome, for whoſe advantage it is to keep up a conſtant intercourſe of Diſputations, do revive them daily, without taking the leaſt notice of the Anſwers that have been returned to them heretofore; But I will be bold to ſay, that *Monſieur de Meaux* did them a great deal of honour, when He condeſcended to make uſe of them. However, ſuch as they are, I will examine them, as they are propounded by him; and whereas they are of two ſorts, ſome indirect, and go upon a pretence of ſettling a point in queſtion; and others direct, and more open; I will begin with the firſt ſort of them.

Object. 1. *There muſt be,* ſays *M.* de Meaux, *without any interruption, an Exterior Profeſſion, of which it may be ſaid, There are the true Believers. Thus it is not ſufficient to alledge at random to us, concealed Believers; they are obliged to ſhew us without interruption, firſt a Viſible Society, of which may be ſaid, They are there; 'tis there they ſerve God in Spirit and Truth; 'tis there they confeſs the Goſpel.* Eng. Refl. page 108.

Anſw. We acknowledg this Exterior Profeſſion *without interruption,* in ſuch a manner, as M. *de Meaux* muſt acknowledg it to have continued in *Judah,* during the Reigns of *Ahaz* and *Manaſſeh*, and in the time when that people was moſt grievouſly corrupted; ſince he himſelf confeſſes, *That God ſtill reſerved to himſelf a ſufficient number of Servants, who participated not in the Idolatry.* We acknowledg ſuch a continuance of it, as muſt be acknowledged among the *Jews* afterwards, during the corruptions of the Prieſts, the Phariſees, and the Scribes, who ſat in *Moſes* his Chair in our Saviour Chriſt's time, and who nevertheleſs mingled their own falſe traditions, and ſuperſtitious inventions, with that Prophet's ſound Doctrine, as M. *de Meaux* himſelf owns. In this profeſſion, even when it was at the worſt, and moſt corrupted, yet ſtill there were, ſome *Zachariaſes*, ſome *Joſephs*, ſome *Simeons*, ſome *Nathanaels*, Eng. Conf. Pag. 17.

that never were partakers of the publick depravations. We acknowledg ſuch a one, as St. *Paul* acknowledged in the ſame people, when
Rom. 11. 5. the whole body of that Nation perſecuted the Goſpel; *God*, ſays the Apoſtle, *hath not caſt away his people; at this preſent time alſo there is a remnant according to the election of grace.* We acknowledg, in ſhort, ſuch a one, as St. *Athanaſius*, St. *Auguſtin*, and St. *Hilary* acknowledg under the Tyranny of the *Arrian* Hereſy, at which time, even when the corruption of the wicked was at the very higheſt pitch, God did ſtill preſerve ſome true Believers in the Exterior Profeſſion; ſo that it might be ſaid, *They are there.* It is evident, that the Errors and Superſtitions, predominant in an Exterior Profeſſion, do not hinder its continuing for ever, ſo long as the good can ſeparate between the clean and the unclean, and by this means ſecure themſelves from the corruptions of falſe Brethren. If M. *de Meaux* ſhould go about to deny this Truth, he would contradict himſelf, he would oppoſe plain experience and matter of fact; he would run counter to St. *Auguſtin*, and counter even to the Scriptures themſelves.

Eng. Refl. pag. 100. Object. 2. *Nor will it be enough to ſhew us theſe Believers diſperſed; they muſt, ſecondly, ſhew them us gathered together, under the Authority of an Eccleſiaſtical Miniſtry, with the Preaching of the Word, with the Adminiſtration of the Sacraments, with the uſe of the Keys, and all the Eccleſiaſtical Government.*

Anſw. As we acknowledg the Exterior Profeſſion, ſo do we in the ſame manner acknowledg the Eccleſiaſtical Miniſtry, that is, in truth, both the one and the other exceedingly changed and depraved; juſt as they were during the Reigns of *Ahaz*, and *Manaſſeh*, and the Prieſthood of *Urijah*; ſuch as they were under the Corruptions of the Prieſts, and Phariſees, and Scribes in Jeſus Chriſt's time; ſuch as they were under the Adminiſtration of *Arrian* Biſhops, in St. *Hilary*'s and St. *Athanaſius*'s time. Whatever M. *de Meaux* ſhall think fit to ſay of that time, the ſame ſhall be our reply for that immediately before the Reformation. 'Tis a received Principle, that the Corruptions of the Miniſtry, tho never ſo groſs, do not take away its ſubſiſtence, ſo long as it can ſtill afford good men ſuch Doctrines as are ſufficient for their Salvation; and leaves them ſtill at liberty to ſeparate theſe from other falſe Doctrines, and falſe Innovations in matters of Practice, ſuperinduced by the Miniſters. If M. *de Meaux* ſhall think fit to call the truth of this ſecond Clauſe into queſtion, I muſt deſire him to inform us by what methods the Miniſtry was preſerved without interruption, among thoſe many cor-

corruptions in *Judah* before the *Babyloniſh* Captivity; which way it was preſerved afterwards, in the midſt of thoſe corruptions that happened ſince the Captivity; by what means it ſubſiſted ſtill in Chriſt's and the Apoſtles times; and again, how it was kept up during all the moſt violent invaſions of the *Arrian* Hereſy, when the World was ſo generally ſeized with that diſtemper; and what the reaſon could be, that the Fathers of the *Alexandrian* Council did not re-ordain the Biſhops, who had revolted to the Hereticks, at their return to the Orthodox Faith.

Object. 3. *By conſequence, they muſt ſhew us a Society of Paſtors and People, whence it follows in the third place, that they muſt be able to name us theſe Paſtors, ſince the Succeſſion of them is manifeſt. To ſeek all this in the Pretended Reformed Church, as it is now ſeparated from the* Roman *Church, is what Mr.* Claude *does not ſo much as dream of; 'tis enough for him, that to the time of the Pretended Reformed's Separation, he finds all this in the* Roman *Church it ſelf. The true Believers were there, as long as thoſe that compoſed the Pretended Reformation were there; when they went forth, or were driven forth, they carried the Church with them; as Mr.* Claude *ſaid in the Conference; This Diſcourſe, more like a Raillery than a ſerious Diſcourſe, is nevertheleſs that which is ſeriouſly held in the new Reformation.* *Meaux's* Eng. Refl. p. 108.

Anſw. If M. *de Meaux* his meaning be, that he would have us draw him an exact Pedigree, and ſhow particularly the Succeſſion and deſcent of all that have diſcharged the Miniſterial Office well, or ill, through all thoſe obſcure Ages of the Church, that would be a task too tedious. But however, ſince he is ſo deſirous it ſhould be done, we will give him ſome particular inſtances. For, as the Scripture hath left us upon record the names of *Urias*, *Annas*, and *Caiaphas* High Prieſts; and as Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory afterwards preſerved thoſe of *Valens*, *Urſacius*, *Germinius*, *Auxentius*, *Euſebius* of *Nicomedia*, and ſeveral others of that Gang from being forgotten; ſo have we alſo retained in memory ſuch as *Nicolas* the ſecond, *Gregory* the ſeventh, *Innocent* the third, *Innocent* the fourth, *Boniface* the eighth, *Engenius* the fourth, *Alexander* the ſixth, *Julius* the ſecond, and many more beſides, who were very unfaithful Stewards of the Miniſtry committed to them. Now, as on the other ſide, the Scripture hath ſignalized the names of *Zacharias*, *Nathanael*, and *Gamaliel*, and as the Hiſtory of the Primitive times hath delivered down to us, thoſe of *Athanaſius*, *Hilary*, *Phebadius*, *Euſebius* of *Vercelli*, and *Lucifer* of *Cagliari*, who valiantly withſtood the incurſions of *Arrianiſm*; So likewiſe the Hiſtory of Latter times, hath alſo left an honourable mention of *Berengarius* Archdeacon of *Angers*, of one *Honorius*,

Prieſt of *Autbun*, of one *Robert* Biſhop of *Lincoln*, one *Nicholas de Clemangis* Archdeacon of *Bayeurs*, one *John* of *Salisbury*, one *John Wicliff* Doctor and Profeſſor of *Oxford*, one *John Huſſe*, and one *Jerome* of *Prague*, and ſeveral other perſons, who in the midſt of the Corruptions that the Age they lived in was debauched with, were eminently uſeful, and mighty inſtruments of the Churches preſervation.

Moreover, If the Church of *Judah* might, after its ſeveral Reformations, reckon in the ſucceſſion of its Miniſtry, not only the good Prieſts and Levites that had been in it, but thoſe too, who had by their extravagancies and errors infected the Miniſtry, and by that means evince its perpetuity; And that, becauſe even then, when thoſe Errors and Corruptions were at the higheſt, the true Church did ſubſiſt ſtill under their Government; If the Chriſtian Church in like manner, might be allowed to reckon in the Succeſſion of hers, not only ſuch as *Athanaſius* and *Hilary*, but others alſo, and ſuch as were tainted with *Arrianiſm*, becauſe, that even while their Hereſy prevailed moſt, God continued to preſerve true Believers under their Miniſtry, notwithſtanding the abominable corruptions of it; If Jeſus Chriſt himſelf did, without any ſcruple, own thoſe very Scribes and Phariſees, in whoſe Doctrine and Practice both he had detected ſuch horrid abuſes (for Miniſters *ſat in Moſes his Chair*) What reaſon hath M. *de Meaux* to deny that which he calls the Pretended Reformed Church the like priviledg, of reckoning, as they did, in her Line of Succeſſion, not only thoſe brave men who durſt boldly and openly oppoſe abuſes and ſuperſtitions, but others alſo that were infected and ſtained with them, ſince ſhe acknowledges, that God ſtill continued to preſerve his Children and Elect under their evil Adminiſtration? A Miniſtry, wherein there is a mixture of good and evil, does not preſently ceaſe to be the ſame Miniſtry by being Reformed, that is, by having the Evil part taken away, and the Good only left behind; no more than a weak diſtempered body ceaſes to be ſtill the ſame body, when recovered of the diſeaſe that brought it into that weak condition. If M. *de Meaux* diſpute this third Anſwer, I could wiſh he would impart to us his own notion of the Miniſtry of *Judah* in *Achaz* his Reign, and how this was the ſame with what *Hezekiah* reformed, and purged from the Corruptions that had crept into it. For, if it was not the ſame Miniſtry afterwards, then the ſucceſſion of the Prieſthood in *Judah* was interrupted, which is a thing that M. *de Meaux* aſſures us never happened; and, if it was the ſame Miniſtry ſtill, then a Reformation does not change the ſpecies of the Miniſtry, although it alter the preſent Condition and Circumſtances of it. Let him pleaſe to inform us too, how he underſtands the Miniſtry, when ſtained with *Arrianiſm*, to have

have remained the same in substance, after it returned to the True Orthodox Faith. For if it did not remain the same, then the Bishops upon their retractation ought to have been ordained over again; and if it did continue the same, then returning to the primitive purity of Doctrine and Worship, does not argue a Ministry to be new.

M. *de Meaux* cannot away with being told, that when we went forth, or were driven forth of the *Romish* Communion, we carried the Church along with us; and he represents such Discourse to be more like Raillery than serious Discourse: But let him look upon it as he pleases, it is still truth at the bottom, and so great a truth as we shall never question in the least. God Almighty keep us from being scandalized at the meanness, the poverty, the sufferings, and the reproaches, with which the World loads a Profession that hath truth and purity of its side, and from even imagining, that these false prejudices hinder it from being the Church. God Almighty preserve us from suffering the splendor of riches, of dignities, and worldly greatness, that attend the contrary Profession, to blind our eyes, and impose upon our understandings so far, that these adventitious beauties should make that pass for the true Church with us. Where true Faith and Worship is, there is the Church. Now this is a treasure that goes along with us, that we have brought away with us when we separated; so that the Church is on our side. And in truth, when we seriously reflect upon this mighty favour vouchsafed us by God, we can never extol it as it deserves, nor mention it with too profound a veneration; But when we look withal how far the pretentions of the Church of *Rome* extend in this particular, they appear to be so very odd, and so utterly groundless, that we have much ado to forbear a disdainful smile at the extravagance of them.

Object. 4. *But whence came their Pastors? Were they also detacht with these pretended Believers from the Body of the* Roman *Church, to perpetuate in the Church thus Reformed the Ecclesiastical Ministry? In no wise, Mr.* Claude *does not understand it so. The Faithful detacht from the* Roman *Church, all on a sudden deposed all the Pastors which were before; that is to say, that before, the Catholick Bishops and Priests, with the Pope at their head, were the Pastors establisht by Jesus Christ; for there must be such for the true Believers, which they contained in their Unity; in the moment that the Reformation appeared, they were all on a sudden deposed, and the Ministry taken out of their hands. But what right had private persons thus all on a sudden, and in one moment to dispossess all their Pastors? 'Tis because they are the true Believers to whom the Ministry appertains of Right, who might consequently dispose of it, take it from some, and give it to others.* Eng. Refl. p. 108, 109.

Answ.

Answ. No body ever told M. *de Meaux*, that the Church was at any time reduced to such extremities, as actually to deprive all her Pastors of their Ministry. That word *All* is perfectly an addition of his own, and does not appear in any of the passages alledged by him out of my Writings; but if he had besides taken the pains to consult what I have spoken to this purpose in my *Defence of the Reformation*, where I have at large explained what the Protestants Principles upon this point are in their utmost extent, He would have met with something very contrary to what is fixed upon me by him here. For thus I deliver my self in that Book. Part 4. Chap. 1. *It is manifest, not only that all the Pastors did not oppose the Reformation, but moreover, that in most places that reformed, the men that shewed themselves most warm and vigorous in promoting it, were persons considerable, both for their office and dignities in the* Latin *Church, who had as much a Call, as can in reason be desired, to preserve the band of Unity entire, and summon Assemblies together. It is further very certain, that in several Reformed Countries, this Change was made with the consent of the greater part of the Clergy, particularly, in* England, *in* Scotland, *in* Sweden, *in* Denmark, *in* Saxony, *in the* Palatinate, *in the* Landgrave *of* Hesse's *Principality, in* Suitzerland, *and in many Towns and States of* Germany. *So that it may be truly affirmed of these several Reformed Countries, that, upon their separation from the* Romish *Communion, they did not assemble on their own heads, but maintained still an Exterior Society, under the lawful Ministry of a competent and very considerable number of Pastors, who gathered them together into one Body; or rather indeed, who prevented their scattering from one another, and preserved the band of unity undissolved amongst them. Among these there were some persons of Religious Houses, some Preachers, some Priests, some Parochial Pastors, some Canons, some Doctors, some Professors in Divinity, whole Universities, some Abbots, some Bishops, some Archbishops, some Cardinals; and if the See of* Rome *had not obstinately denied all access to the light of the Gospel, there might have been even Popes themselves too, for some of these were highly sensible what necessity there was for a Reformation. However, it may be proved, that there were still in the Body of those Pastors, a remnant according to the Election of Grace; as St.* Gregory Nazianzen *hath observed upon the like occasion, there was in the time of the* Arrian *Heresy.* Thus far I have related my own expres words, from whence it appears, how little reason M. *de Meaux* had to tax me with another kind of opinion in the case.

The Protestant Pastors are of two sorts, either such as at the first laboured in bringing about the Reformation; or else such as were ordained afterwards, when the separation was made. The former sort received their Ministry, in the way it was then conveyed under the Government of the *Romish* Church, that is, after a very impure and defective man-

manner; but it was a Miniſtry ſtill, and proportionably to the good it had left, a lawful one; tho unlawful, ſo far as it was corrupted. This God Almighty in his goodneſs was pleaſed to cleanſe, and bring it back again to its true, natural, and primitive Inſtitution; but to this beginning of his favour, he added alſo that of his bleſſing upon their endeavours; and cauſing almoſt infinite companies of men, by the help and advantage of their inſtructions, to open their eyes, admit the light, and receive the Reformation. Now this very thing was a ſeal and confirmation of their Call, as well on God's part, as his Churches. As for the other Paſtors appointed afterwards, they received their Miniſtry, not only as having it communicated to them by the former ſort; but which is more, by having their perſons lawfully choſen by the Church to that Office, and Conſequently obtained it by a purer, and more lawful and fairer method, than it was wont to be conferred before the Reformation.

As for the other Miniſters, that ſet themſelves in direct oppoſition againſt the Reformation, and did boldly and publickly declare themſelves enemies to ſuch proceedings, what pretence is there for an Argument, that our Fathers were ſtill obliged to own them for their true and lawful Paſtors? They put themſelves forward; and became the moſt fiery and zealous vindicators of what our Fathers lookt upon to be no better than Error and Superſtition. In their Aſſemblies they had decreed Articles of Divine Faith, and impoſed the belief and practice of them under the higheſt Oligations, and the penalties of *Anathemas*. The Reformation, which our Fathers judged a very holy and indiſpenſably neceſſary work, they had condemned for a heinous and mortal ſin. They had, according as the Proteſtants Principles interpreted the thing, made a Schiſm in the Church with abundance of pomp and publick formality, and by this means created a diviſion between Brethren, not only, when it was neither reaſonable, nor neceſſary, but directly againſt both reaſon and neceſſity. In a word, they carried things to ſuch an extravagant height, as at laſt to have recourſe to open violence, and occaſion the ſhedding a great deal of innocent blood every where. How can M. *de Meaux* pretend, that theſe ought to be ſtill acknowledged by the Proteſtants for good and faithful Miniſters? We find indeed, that Jeſus Chriſt Commiſſioned his Diſciples, *Go and teach all Nations*; but we do not meet with any ſuch additional paſſage as this, *and them that refuſe to receive your Doctrines, knock them on the head, and cut them to pieces.* We find that he eſtabliſht *Paſtors and Teachers for the gathering together of the Saints*; but we do not find that he gave them authority utterly to root out, and exterminate all that refuſed to aſſemble under them. Matt. 28. Eph. 4.

Per-

Perſecution was never any badge of the Chriſtian Miniſtry. M. *de Meaux* may enjoy his own Opinion in the Caſe; but for our parts, we think it very rational to ſay, that before all theſe things happened, the Biſhops and Prieſts, *with the Pope in the head of them*, might be conſidered in one reſpect as the Paſtors of the *Latin* Church; tho in another reſpect, they were at the ſame time the Churches enemies and oppreſſors; but when they had carried on their violence and oppreſſion to that height we juſt now ſpoke of, they had manifeſtly deveſted themſelves of all the right that could be pretended to afterwards, and of all Authority over our Anceſtors; and thoſe Anceſtors of ours were not only to be commended for withdrawing themſelves from under their guidance, but they would have been mightily to blame if they had done otherwiſe.

After the ſame manner, many Believers in the *Eaſtern* and *Weſtern* parts forſook the Guidance of thoſe who had formerly been acknowledged to be their lawful Paſtors. They compoſed the Body of Biſhops and Prieſts, every whit as much as the *Latin* Prelates M. *de Meaux* ſpeaks of; they attributed to themſelves the name of Catholicks as much as they; they had a Pope and Patriarchs at the head of them, juſt as theſe laſt had; and yet, notwithſtanding all this, the Faithful ſeparated from them, and would not own them for their lawful Paſtors any longer; and all upon the very ſame accounts that moved our Fathers to diſown the Miniſtry of M. *de Meaux* his Prelates. Thus alſo in the Fifteenth Century, the whole Kingdom of *France*, who till that time had acknowledged *Benedict* the Thirteenth, ſeated in the Papal Chair of *Avignon*, for the lawful Paſtor of the Univerſal Church, did yet upon much weaker motives, than what our Fathers went upon, publickly and ſolemnly detract their obedience to him and to his Clergy, and did not own the other Pope, who was ſet up in oppoſition to him, neither. When the Conduct of the Biſhops and Prieſts is manifeſtly contrary to the natural inſtitution and deſign of the Miniſtry; when it becomes prejudicial to the Salvation of the Believers under their Charge, and to the preſervation and continuance of the Church; tho they were ten times as many as met in the Council of *Trent*; and where they have but one, could ſhew a Hundred Popes in the head of them; I do aver, that the Fear of God, and a ſenſe of Religion oblige us to leave them there, and acknowledg them for our Miniſters no longer. If M. *de Meaux* does not think this ſound Divinity, we are ſorry for it; but for all that, we ſhall keep cloſe to the determination of Chriſt's Diſciples in the Caſe, who returned this Anſwer to the Council of Chief Prieſts and Scribes,

Acts 4 19. *Whether it be right in the ſight of God, to hearken unto you, more than unto God, judg ye.*

Object.

Object. 5. *They ſhould then at leaſt, according to theſe Principles, have expected the deciſions of* Trent; *and ſince, before thoſe deciſions, ſo many Churches ſeparated from* Rome, *had already given themſelves Paſtors, the Reformation will have begun by a manifeſt Uſurpation.* *Meaux's* Eng. Reſl. p. 109.

Anſw. They ſhould not, according to theſe Principles, have expected one minute longer. Is it M. *de Meaux* his opinion, that the Proteſtants, who were verily perſwaded, the Worſhip of the *Roman* Church was ſuperſtitious, and its Doctrines oppoſite to the purity of the Goſpel, ought to have continued in the publick profeſſion of theſe, contrary to all ſincerity, and the dictates of their own Conſciences? Can he think it was their duty to communicate in theſe, at the very time they condemned them, and required a Reformation? But our Fathers were plain honeſt men, not acquainted with all theſe ſubtilties; they ſhewed a ſerious ſenſe of Religion, ſo that it was neceſſary for them, from that time forward, to ſeparate negatively at leaſt, that is, not to partake in what they judged to be evil, and diſpleaſing to Almighty God. Beſides, the Court of *Rome*, and all her Prelates, had already, long before the Council of *Trent*, made ſuch publick and peremptory declarations againſt all Reforming, that there was not any thing of redreſs to be expected from their Miniſtry for the future. They had already let looſe all their Preachers and Writers upon it, to ſtifle it in its birth, and blacken it with railings and ſlanders. They had already condemned it publickly in their Schools and Univerſities; The Pope himſelf had already thundered out his Excommunicating Bulls againſt it, and the Emperor publiſht his bloody Edict of *Worms* againſt *Luther* and his Followers; and the Perſecution had ſhewed it ſelf already every where in the moſt violent and tragical manner that could be. And now what could be hoped for from theſe pretended Paſtors, who had made ſuch manifeſt diſcoveries of their inclinations already?

And yet, notwithſtanding all this, it is evident, that the Proteſtants never declined any peaceful Conferences, with thoſe very perſons that put them to death; and it is as evident further, that they did, by the moſt earneſt applications, and the moſt rational Arguments poſſible, ſeveral times demand a free Council, where things might be ſearcht into and amended, in the fear of God, and by the Rules of Chriſtianity. Now this was an irrefragable Argument of their unfeigned deſire to ſee unity and concord between the two parties ſettled again, provided that Truth might ſuffer no injury by ſuch an accommodation. If after all this, M. *de Meaux* be ſtill of opinion, that the Churches had no right to reform themſelves, nor to go off from their obedience to the See of

Rome, nor hearken to the Reformed Ministers; but that in doing so, they became guilty of *a manifest usurpation*; we shall tell him, with his Lordship's good leave, that we cannot for our hearts think, as he does of the matter; and, that on the contrary, we look upon what was done by our Fathers, as a Just, Heroical, and a Christian Act, an Act that contributed much to God's Glory, and for which his name ought to be for ever bless'd and praised.

Eng. Refl. Page 110.

Object. 6. *Such is Mr.* Claude's *Doctrine; if I change, if I exaggerate, if I diminish, let him without delay publish his writing to confound me. But if this be his Doctrine, I conjure our Reformed to consider what prodigies of Doctrine must be taught to defend their Reformation. For first, where do they read, in what Gospel, in what Epistle, in what writing of the Old or New Testament, that all the Pastors of the Church should in a moment fall from their Chair, and become private persons, whom one might and ought freely disobey? Has Jesus Christ hidden this great Mystery from us? And would he not have precaution'd us against this horrible Temptation of his Church?*

Answ. It is not with the least design to *confound* M. *de Meaux*, that I publish my writing now; I have too great a regard for his Person, and too high an esteem for his worth, to make the occasioning him any personal Displeasure, part of my intention. I own, he hath related the passages of my writing faithfully, and he will find them just as he hath transcribed them, in the piece I lately published. But it is neither any confounding thing, nor indeed so very extraordinary for a man in the midst of a dispute, sometimes to take ones Adversaries Expressions in a sence different from what they ought to be taken in; and M. *de Meaux*, who pretended in his ninth Reflection, that I was guilty of the like mistake, and who thought he was obliged to let me know my fault, did not, as I apprehend, intend thereby to *confound* and expose me. These are only misunderstandings, and want of presence of mind, things that all Men living are subject to, and all of it depends upon mens being more or less intent upon the matter. So that M. *de Meaux* his fame will not be less celebrated and glorious, by telling him, that tho he gave a faithful Relation of what I said, yet he put upon it a Construction beyond what the words could be extended to. For, as I observed upon the foregoing Objection, I never said, That *all the Pastors of the Church fell in a moment from their Chairs, and were become private Persons, whom one might, and ought freely to disobey.* This he will never be able to find in any of my Writings; and he will indeed meet with the direct contrary in some of them, as hath been made appear by the passage I alledged out of

of the Book I wrote in defence of the Reformation. This paſſage he might very well be ſuppoſed to be acquaintod with, becauſe he told me himſelf at our meeting, that he had read the Book.

He ſhould therefore alter his Objection, and retrench it only, to the requiring ſome Paſſages of Scripture to be produced, whereby it appears, that a great number, or if you pleaſe, the major part of the Paſtors of the Church, ſhould ſo groſly prevaricate from the Purity of the Goſpel, and conſequently fall from their Chairs. Whereupon, I ſhall alſo enquire of him in the firſt place, Whether there be any ſuch Paſſages in Scripture, as intimate, that not only the greateſt part, but almoſt all the Paſtors of the Church, ſhould fall into *Arianiſm*, and for that reaſon be lookt upon as fallen from the Epiſcopacy, unleſs they repented of their Defection from the Truth, and returned to the Orthodox Religion. I will deſire him to ſhew me ſome paſſages of Scripture, implying, that Three hundred thirty and eight Biſhops convened in a Council at *Conſtantinople*, ſhould in a moment fall from their Chairs, and become private Perſons, whom one might and ought freely diſobey, for having determined the pretended Hereſy of the *Iconoclaſtæ*.

Does not M. *de Meaux* conſider, That Proofs from Holy Scripture are not to be expected, when ſuch things are in debate, as happen according to the common courſe of Nature. Now, conſider the Prelates how you will, either as many, or as few; as aſſembled, or not aſſembled; as having a Pope at the head of them, or not having one; ſtill they are men, and conſequently, according to the common courſe of Nature, liable to Extravagancies and Failings. If M. *de Meaux* be deſirous to exempt them from this common condition of Mankind, then it muſt lie upon him to produce Texts of Scripture, becauſe they are not ordinary Accidents, but extraordinary Priviledges; which ſhould be proved by him. There is no Man that requires Texts of Scripture to convince him that he is ſubject to Diſeaſes and Death, as the reſt of Men are; but if he ſhould pretend to be excepted out of this general Rule, then it muſt be his buſineſs to prove the Juſtice and Truth of thoſe Pretenſions.

And yet after all, M. *de Meaux* knows well enough, That there are Paſſages enough in Scripture, which makes theſe Corruptions and Miſbehaviours in the Miniſtry, to be no ſurpriſing thing to us, when they fall out. Thus *Iſaiah* ſpeaking of Gods Ancient People, ſaid, *His watchmen are blind, they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark, ſleeping, lying down, loving to ſlumber. Yea, they are greedy dogs, which can never have enough; they are ſhepherds that cannot underſtand; they all look to their own way, every one for his gain from his quarter.* After the ſame Iſa. 56. 10, 11.

Jer. 2. 8. manner God complains by the mouth of *Jeremiah*, *That the Priests said not, Where is the Lord? and they that handle the Law, knew him not; the Pastors also transgrest against him, and the Prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after things that do not profit.* Jesus Christ himself hath not left us unforewarned in this particular, *Beware*, says he, *of false Prophets, that come to*
Matt. 7. 15. *you in sheeps cloathing, but inwardly they are ravening Wolves.* But St. *Paul* hath delivered himself upon this Subject, in terms sufficiently intelligible; for, not to insist upon some Passages elsewhere, that are dreadfully strong to this purpose; thus he speaks to his Disciple *Timothy*, *The time*
2 Tim. 4. 3, 4. *will come*, says he, *when they will not endure sound Doctrine, but after their own Lusts shall they heap to themselves*, or according to the emphatical Signification of the *Greek* word, *pile to themselves heaps of Teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the Truth, and shall be turned unto Fables.* In these last Ages we have seen but too much of these heaps or piles of Teachers, fond of Fables; and the Prediction hath been accomplished but too fully; for really, look which way one will upon the greatest part of the Prelates, alive at the time of the Reformation, and what with respect to their Morals, what to their Knowledg and Learning, and what to the discharge of their several Offices and Trusts, it may be said, without the least Injustice to their Persons, that if they fell from their Chairs, they sat so low before, that they had but a very easy fall of it.

Eng. Refl. Pag. 110. Object. 7. *But this is not all; after he hath shewn us in the Scripture this universal fall of all the Pastors, he must also find there, this Ministry of right returned to the private Persons that were never vested with it. And what is Mr.* Claude's *meaning? Is it that these private Persons became of right Ministers, without any bodies having ordained them; or that without being Ministers, they have right of their sole Authority to set up Ministers in the Church? Let them shew me it in the Scripture, or let them for ever renounce the pretence of having the Scripture alone for a Guide.*

I find in the Scripture, that Jesus Christ said to his Apostles, As my Father sent me, I also send you. I find in the Scripture, that the Apostles thus send others, and consecrate themselves Successors. But that all their Successors being
Pag. 111. *on the sudden fallen, and deprived of the right of their Ministry, this Ministry should of right return to the Faithful, to whom none had ever given it, to dispose of at their Pleasure; neither hath the Scripture said, nor following Ages imagined: 'Tis then a Monster, the birth of which was reserved for the time of the new Reformation.*

Answ.

Anſw. M. *de Meaux* is ſtill in purſuit of that Phantome of his, the univerſal Fall of the Paſtors, the belief whereof he fixes upon me, as of a thing that had actually come to paſs. He hath been told already, that this is a miſtake; and I tell him over again once more, that my writing contains no ſuch thing. To ſay, That *the Church ſometimes takes away her Miniſtry from men that have palpably abuſed it, and that the Body of the* Latin *Prelates, who ſtood poſſeſt of the Miniſtry, and met at* Trent, *deſerved to be lookt upon by our Fathers, as Miniſters that had deprived themſelves of their Miniſtry*; is not to affirm, that a univerſal fall happened to *all* the Paſtors. There is nothing of Univerſality implied in theſe Expreſſions; the Miniſters will never ſignifie, *all the Miniſters*; and the Body of the Prelates ſignifies the majority; but it does not ſignifie *all to a Man*, without any Exception. M. *de Meaux* ſhould not impoſe a meaning upon my words, which they do not contain, and which beſides is expreſly contrary to what I have ſaid upon the ſame occaſion elſewhere.

Neither ought he to ſuppoſe, as he does, that our Fathers at the time of their Separation from *Rome*, were merely private Perſons; for this was never granted, and we think it will always be denied upon good grounds. In the firſt place, our Fathers were joined together in a Chriſtian Society; and a Chriſtian Society muſt not be lookt upon as mere private Perſons, and no more. Beſides, they had almoſt continually at the head of them, ſeveral Paſtors, who had reformed and gathered them together, at leaſt, as long as the Difficulty of the Times, and the Perſecutions from their Enemies would admit of it. So that M. *de Meaux* hath no ground for calling them *private Perſons*. I am very ſenſible, what it is he means by it; that out of the Communion of the Body of their Prelates, there is no lawful Society, and Men cannot be otherwiſe than ſcattered and diſpers'd. But is it poſſible that in the *Romiſh* Communion men ſhould be ſo ſtrongly poſſeſt with the Notions of Numbers and Multitude, that all the reſt muſt be reckoned for nothing? Shall not the concurrence of a very great many in the Juſtice of the ſame Cauſe, in the Purity of the ſame Faith, the ſame Hope, and the ſame Worſhip, in full agreement with the Word of God, paſs for ſo conſiderable a band of Unity, as may warrant our ſaying, this makes a Church; when at the ſame time it is ſet in Oppoſition to a more numerous, and more powerful, but an unjuſt Party, that ſtands up againſt it? And if we be not the ſtrongeſt ſide, muſt we therefore, if M. *de Meaux* be to give Sentence in the Cauſe, be lookt upon as wretched, diſperſed Creatures? Let him judg ſo in Gods Name, we cannot help it; but he will never gain us to his Opinion, ſo long as we know of what

what price true Faith, Righteousness and Holiness, are in the sight of God. Jesus Christ did not promise when ye shall meet with the innumerable Body of the Clergy, rich with their fat Preferments, and gloriously dress in their Robes; but he promised, *When two or three are gathered together in my Name, there will I be in the midst of them.* He did not pronounce, Blessed are the strongest side, tho engaged in never so unjust a Cause; but he said, *Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.* St. *Paul* did not say, Ye see your calling, Brethren, how that it includes all that the World can call great, so many Arch-Bishops, and Bishops, and Abbots, and Primates, and so many Cardinals, and in the head of them all, a Pope; but he said, *Ye see your calling, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.*

Matth. 18. 20.
Mateh. 5. 10.
1 Cor. 1. 26, 27.

These two Observations thus premised, I come now to the Question M. *de Meaux* puts here, how I understand the Ministry to have of right returned to private Persons, who were never vested in it? I answer, My meaning is not, that the Ministry returns to private Persons; but my meaning is, that when some Pastors have run out into such vile Extravagancies, as forbid men to own them for their lawful Pastors any longer, then their Ministry returns of right to the Church; that is, not only to those other Pastors who have discharged their Duty faithfully; but to the faithful People that live under their Guidance also; in a word, to the whole Body of the Church together. Not that private Persons presently become Ministers upon this account, nor that the whole have any power immediately, and of themselves to exercise the Ministerial Function; but because the right of having Ministers, is a right that cannot be past away, belonging to the whole Body of the Church; and that next after God, the Church is the true and lawful Source from whence the Call to the Ministry must come. Thus it will be easy to apprehend in what manner the Ministry returns to her; for we shall find the case almost the same in the Religious Society, as in the Civil, where the Government is Democratical; for there the right of Magistracy naturally belongs, not to the Body of Magistrates only, but to the whole Commonwealth, provided they have not devested themselves of that right, as all Countrys under a Monarchical Government have done. When therefore any Magistrates become Enemies, and destructive to the Society, by abusing the Offices and Trust reposed in them, the Offices themselves are not lost, but return of right to the Society which had conferred them upon these, and can bestow them upon other Persons.

ſons. The Miniſtry can never dye in the Church, ſo long as the Church endures upon Earth. The Perſons to whom ſhe commits this Truſt, may betray themſelves unworthy of it, and for their abuſes and faults deprive themſelves of it; but they cannot utterly extinguiſh the thing it ſelf, that returns back to its firſt Original.

If M. *de Meaux* would be at the trouble to conſult my Book entituled, *The Defence of the Reformation*, Part 4. Ch. 3. where this ſubject is diſcours'd of copiouſly and fully, he would there meet, not only with a ſatisfactory ſolution to his Objection, but would ſee, into the bargain, the truth of our Principle ſubſtantially demonſtrated by Arguments taken from Scripture, Reaſon, and the Fathers. He would there find the difference between the Apoſtles extraordinary Miniſtry, and that of ordinary Paſtors, in that the former, being deſigned for the gathering together a Chriſtian Church, and laying the firſt foundations of it firm, muſt of neceſſity be derived from Chriſt immediately; whereas the other, intended only for the preſervation and propagation of that Church, muſt be derived from the Church it ſelf. By this difference well weighed, he would perceive, that although Jeſus Chriſt alone ſent abroad his Apoſtles then, yet the ordinary Miniſtry may nevertheleſs belong to the Church; not merely, becauſe it is *for the Church*, and no other Reaſon, for that may as well be made an Argument for the Apoſtles Miniſtry belonging to it too; but becauſe it is part of the Goods put into her Poſſeſſion, and imparted by her to Perſons that exerciſe the ſeveral Functions belonging to it in her name. The conſequence of all which is, that as it is ſhe that confers it, ſo it is ſhe, to whom it reverts, when treacherous and deceitful Perſons are fallen from it.

Object. 8. *The Miniſtry, ſay they, belongs to the Church of right. It does without doubt belong to the Church, as the Eyes do to the Body. The Miniſtry is not for it ſelf, no more are the Eyes. The Miniſtry is eſtabliſht to be the Light of the Church, as the Eyes are the Light, or as Jeſus Chriſt calls them, the Torch of the Body. Does it follow, that when the Body has loſt its Eyes, it can remake them of it ſelf? No, without doubt it will have need of the Hand which made them at firſt, and there will never be any thing but a new Creation, which can repair the Work that the firſt Creation had formed. In this manner, if the Catholick Church could, as they would imagine in the new Reformation, loſe all on a ſudden, all its Miniſters, without their having given themſelves Succeſſors, according to the Order of Jeſus Chriſt; Jeſus Chriſt muſt come again on Earth, to re-eſtabliſh this Sacred Order by a new Creation.* Eng. Refl. p. 111.

Anſw.

Answ. To shew how little this Similitude of the Eyes, is to the purpose, we need only retort it back upon M. *de Meaux* himself. If the Church cannot make it self Ministers, because the Body cannot make it self Eyes; then Men who are already Ministers, cannot Ordain other Ministers, because Eyes cannot make other Eyes. There is obvious to every one that considers it, an essential difference between these two things, which hinders them from being aptly compared with one another in the case before us. For nature hath not appointed the use of the sight in a continual Succession of Eyes, as she hath fixed the Exercise of the Ministry in a continued Succession of Ministers. So that to make M. *de Meaux*'s a good and pertinent Argument, the Persons of the first Ministers of the Christian Religion must have been contrived to endure as long as the Church, as the Eyes are designed to last as long as the Body. If God had made the Eyes by a constant and successive Motion, it is very probable this would have been effected by the whole Oeconomy of the Body being concerned in the disposal of it, rather than that the Eyes only should have that Power; because we see that the Blood, and the Spirits, and all that depends upon Succession in the Body, is formed that way. But there is no need of engaging our selves in these Philosophical Speculations; it is sufficient that M. *de Meaux* be told, that the very root and ground of the Vocation being inherent in the Body of the Church, in as much as the right of the Ministry belongs to her, and such a right as can never be lost; 'tis not, nor can in any wise be necessary that Jesus Christ should come again upon Earth to re-establish this Order by a new Creation.

Eng. Refl. p. 112, 113.

Object. 9. *Let us come to this interrupted State of the thirty first Article, which Mr.* Claude *undertakes to explicate to us. This interrupted State is alledged here, to found the necessity of an extraordinary Vocation in the pretended Reformers; for, let us hear how this Article speaks. It has been sometimes necessary, and namely in our days, in which the state of the Church was interrupted, that God should raise up People after an extraordinary manner to set up the Church anew. You see Gentlemen, this interrupted state of the Church is alledged only to found the extraordinary Vocation of your pretended Reformers. But to found the necessity of an extraordinary Vocation, 'tis not sufficient that the Ministry is impure, it must have ceased.*

Answ. It is not necessary for the founding an extraordinary Vocation, that the Ministry should have absolutely ceased; it is enough, if we can say what the Article in our Confession expresses, That the State of the Church was interrupted. For as on one hand the Interruption of the

State

State of the Church, does not imply, either that the Church was utterly extinct, nor that the Miniſtry hath quite ceaſed, but only that both of them have been extreamly corrupted, in reſpect of Doctrines, Worſhip, and Government, as well as in Manners; ſo likewiſe this extraordinary vocation, is not at all the creation of a new Miniſtry, ſo as to make a new Church, as M. *de Meaux* fancies it is; but we mean by it an extraordinary diſpenſation of God's good Providence, manifeſting it ſelf in the aſſiſtance he affords the Church, in order to her reſcue out of ſo deplorable a Condition. This extraordinary good Providence was ſeen in proportioning and adapting the gifts and qualifications of the perſons employed in effecting the Reformation, to that great and difficult work they undertook, and the exceeding great need the Church ſtood in of their aſſiſtance. The Miniſtry of the firſt Reformers was an ordinary Miniſtry, and ſo, more than enough, to juſtify their labouring for a Reformation. It had been conveyed down to them in a very impure way, but ſtill it was conveyed down to them; and being ſo, made them to become perſons in a publick capacity, and, as ſuch, obliged them to endeavour the ſafety of the Church. Now if you conſider the Reformation it ſelf, it was a very extraordinary work, for Reformations are not things that happen every day; and they became ſenſible of the obligations they were under to attempt it, by two extraordinary things; to wit, by that meaſure of underſtanding, that holy zeal, and other graces, which God was pleaſed to impart to them in a more than uſual proportion; and by that extream deſolation to which they found the Church at that time reduced. When a Veſſel at Sea is in mighty danger, and juſt upon being Shipwrackt, men muſt not ſtand upon an extraordinary vocation in the Pilot, as if that only could give him a right, or oblige him to lend his aſſiſtance; but they ſhould conſider that the preſent occaſion and exigencies are extraordinary, and that his endeavours and ſervice for preſerving it, will be extraordinary too. In like manner, the Article of our Confeſſion, wherein we ſay, *That it was neceſſary God ſhould raiſe up people after an extraordinary manner, to ſet up the Church anew, the ſtate whereof was interrupted*, does not relate to the right men had to labour after the Reformation; but the meaning of it is, that the condition the Church was in at that time being extraordinary, the attempts men ought to make for her deliverance, ought to have been proportionably extraordinary alſo, and conſequently, that the gifts and abilities which God was pleaſed to honour them with, in order to the effecting this, were in like manner extraordinary. They that will give themſelves the trouble of reading the Fourth Chapter of the Second Part, and the Fourth Chapter of the Fourth Part

of the *Defence of the Reformation*, may there see this Head treated of at large.

Eng. Refl. p.113,114. Object. 10. *To see, what an overthrow to Jesus Christ's Order Mr.* Claude *here introduces, we need only consider the Promises of Jesus Christ, and see in what it has pleased him principally to establish the strength of this Church. She is strong, she is invincible, because Jesus Christ has said, that Hell should not prevail against her: But he did not say that Hell should not prevail against her, till after he had said, Thou art* Peter, *and upon this Rock will I build my Church; adding presently after, I will give unto thee the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. 'Tis then in the Ministry, confessing and declaring Jesus Christ, and using the Authority of the Keys, that Jesus Christ hath principally established the strength of his Church.*

Answ. Jesus Christ hath not establisht that strength of the Church, which must render her triumphant over the Gates of Hell, neither in the Believers, nor in their Ministers, but he hath fixed it in himself, and in the wonderful care and protection of his good Providence. Upon this account it is, that he says, not, *Thou* shalt build, but *I will build my Church*; and, *I am with you always even unto the end of the World.* As for the Believers, every days experience produces sad proofs of their weakness, and warns them, that they must not presume upon themselves for any thing. And for the Ministry, there are so many instances of its being brought into this wretched condition, that M. *de Meaux* must needs either have quite lost his memory, or he could not tell us what we saw just before in the Objection, and speak in good earnest all the while.

What was become pray of this strength of the Ministry, when both East and West were corrupted with *Arianism*, and some out of an ungodly Principle, some through the seducements of others that were so ungodly, some out of an easy compliance with other mens humours, some through ignorance, and some for fear and cowardice, threw the Consubstantiality of the Son of God out of doors. † *I have often,* said *Gregory Nazianzen, wept abundantly, to observe how this impiety spread it self*

† Πολλάκις ἐδάκρυσα, ὁρῶν ἅ ποτε χρὴν ἅ ἀσεβείας, καὶ ἅ νῦν ἐπικρατήσαντα διαγωγὴν τῷ ὀρθῷ λόγῳ, παρὰ πᾶν προσδοκηθὲν λόγῳ. Τῷ ὄντι γὰρ φοιμώδεις ἠφορμήθησαν, καὶ τὸ μεγαλυνόμενον, καὶ φοιμώδεις πολλοὶ διέφθειραν ἅ ἁπλοῦν μυ. Ἤρκουν μερίδι ἀνθρωπίνῃ, ἅ ἐκκλησίαις τῆς Θεοῦ λόγω. πολλοῖς ἱερῶν καὶ σφαγίοις συνελεγμένοις, τοῖς μὲ χεῖρές τε καὶ μὴ χειτὼν, καὶ αὐτοῖς τοῖς μεγάλοις τῆς Θείᾳ δεῖ ἡμῶν πάθεσι. πλὴν γὲ ὀλίγων ἄγαν, καὶ τέτων ὄζοι διὰ σμικρότητα παρεφείσης, ἢ δι' ἀρετὴν ἀντίζηλ, ὡς ἔδει σπέρμα καὶ ῥίζαν ὑπολειφθῆναι τῷ Ἰσραὴλ, ἵνα ἀναβλάστῃ πάλιν, καὶ ἀναβίωσιν ἅ ἐπιῤῥοίαις τῆς πνεύματος, πάντες τῆς χαιρῆς μιᾶνσι, τοσῆτον ἀλλήλων διενεχθέντες, ὅσον πρὸ μ' ὀτέρου, πρὸ ἅ ὕστερον τῆτο παθεῖν; καὶ τὰς μὲ προαγωνισὰς, καὶ προσάτας ἡμῶν ἅ ἀσεβείας, τὰς ἅ ταχθείσας τὰ λόγε. Greg. Naz. Orat. 21. In Laud. Athanas. p. 387. Edit. Paris. 1630.

ſelf through all parts, and that thoſe very perſons whoſe duty and office it was to aſſert and vindicate the Word, were themſelves turned perſecutors of the ſound Doctrine. For in truth, the Paſtors have dealt fooliſhly, as the Scripture ſays; many Shepherds have laid waſte my Vineyard, they ſpoiled it, and covered with reproach my pleaſant portion; That is, the Church of God watered with the ſweat and blood of ſo many Martyrs, before and ſince the coming of Jeſus Chriſt, collected and conſecrated by the ſufferings of God himſelf, who died for our Salvation: Except ſome few of them, who either were diſeſteemed for their meanneſs, or who made oppoſition by their courage, (for it was neceſſary there ſhould ſome remain untainted, to be, as it were, the ſeed and root, out of which Iſrael *might bud out, and flouriſh again) all complied with the times. This only difference there was between them, that ſome were taken in the ſnare ſooner, and others later; and ſome were the Ringleaders of impiety, while others followed and had the ſecond place: * In this manner,* ſays *Cardinal Baronius, did* Gregory *bewail the wretched downfall of all the Eaſtern Church. But if to this we add the ruine, which at the ſame time was brought upon the whole Weſtern Church, which I have already given a particular relation of, we ſhall be eaſily inclined to think, that the Chriſtian World never ſaw a more perillous and diſorderly time than this. For almoſt all the Paſtors of the ſeveral Churches, were fallen into this precipice, and the Catholick Church never had ſo deformed and gaſtly an aſpect.*

* Hæc & alia de his Gregor. dum luget ingentem cladem ex eo Satanæ conventu univerſæ Orientali Eccleſiæ illatam. Cui ſi quis addat ruinam illam ſuperius recenſitam, quam occidentalis Eccleſia paſſa eſt, facile judicabit, nullum unquam antea fuiſſe tempus, quo univerſus Chriſtianus orbis magis fuerit conturbatus, Cunctis ferme paſtoribus Eccleſiarum, paucis duntaxat exceptis, in præceps adactis; nec tetriorem unquam eſſe viſam Eccleſiæ Catholicæ faciem. *Baron. Ann. ad Ann.* 359. *Edit. Antverp.*

Where was the ſtrength of the Miniſtry, during all that time of Darkneſs and Ignorance in the ninth and tenth Century, that time that forced *Herivius* Biſhop of *Rheims* to complain, that Chriſtian Religion was juſt periſhing, and ſtood as it were, upon the very brink of the Precipice. † *There is ſcarce any degree,* ſays he, *or any order of Men in the Church,*

† Omnis pene ordo, omniſque ſtatus Eccleſiæ confuſus ac temeratus eſt. Deniq; ne nobis parcere videamur, qui aliorum Errata corrigere debemus, Epiſcopi dicimur, ſed Epiſcopale Officium non implemus. Miniſterium prædicationis relinquimus, eos qui nobis commiſſi ſunt videmus Deum deſerere, & in pravis actibus jacere, & tacemus, nec eis manum correctionis tendimus. Sed, & ſi aliquando quædam dicere cæperimus, quæ carnalibus eorum animis valeant diſplicere, dicunt de nobis quod in Evangelio Dominus de ſedentibus in Moyſis Cathedra dixit, alligant onera gravia & importabilia, & imponunt in humeros hominum, digito autem ſuo nolunt ea movere, *Matt.* 23. Sicq; fit, ut nobis tacentibus, grex Domini pereat, & per abrupta vitiorum præceps actus, luporum immanium morſibus pateat; dumq; deeſt, qui eos vitæ vias ingredi doceat, libere per devia gradiuntur erroris, & impletur in eis, quod per prophetam dicitur, *Iſa.* 5.

Zelus apprehendit populum imeruditum; & alibi, Idcirco, inquit Captivus abiit populus meus, quia non habuit ſcientiam. Penſemus qui unquam per Miniſterium linguæ noſtræ de perverſo opere converſi pœnitentiam egerunt; quis luxuriam noſtra prædicatione deſeruit, quis avaritiam, quis ſuperbiam declinavit? *Conc. Troſlei. Ann. Chriſt.* 909. *Labb. Collect. Tom.* 9. *Pag.* 523. *Edit. Lut. Paris* 1671.

but what is utterly confounded and corrupted; and leſt we ſhould ſeem over partial to our ſelves, who ought without favour or partiality to correct the faults of other Men, we go by the name of Biſhops, but we have the Title only, the Office and Duty of a Biſhop we do not diſcharge. The buſineſs of Preaching we lay utterly aſide, we ſee the People committed to our charge forſake God, and drown themſelves in Vice and Leudneſs; yet ſtill we hold our Peace, and never ſtretch out a correcting hand to reclaim them. But if we ſometimes take upon us to ſpeak what may work ſome remorſe, and make their carnal Spirits uneaſy; they immediately apply to us, what our Lord in the Goſpel ſaid concerning the Scribes that ſat in Moſes *Chairs: They bind heavy Burthens, and grievous to be born, and lay them on Mens ſhoulders, but they themſelves will not move them with one of their fingers. Thus we ſtand mute, and the Lords flock is loſt by that means; overwhelming themſelves with wickedneſs, they are expoſed as a prey to the devouring Wolf, and having no Body to inſtruct them in the way of Life, eaſily loſe themſelves in the mazes and deſerts of Error. Thus the ſaying of the Prophet is fulfilled in them;* Jealouſy ſhall overtake this ignorant People. *And in another place;* Therefore my People are gone into Captivity, becauſe they have no knowledg, *Iſa.* 5. 13. *Let us recollect, if we can, who have by means of our Preaching been turned from their evil Works, and repented ſincerely of them? What Man is there, that upon our Inſtructions and Exhortations, hath abandoned his Luxury, or left off his Avarice, or abated of his Pride?*

Where was the ſtrength of the Miniſtry to be found, when the Author of a Sermon inſerted among St. *Bernard*'s, addreſſes himſelf to the Clergy of his time in this manner? ‖ *The Church of God is committed to your care, and you are called the Paſtors; but ye are in truth, the Robbers and*

‖ Eccleſia Dei vobis commiſſa eſt, & dicimini Paſtores, cum ſitis raptores. Et paucos habemus, heu! Paſtores, multos autem excommunicatores. Et utinam ſufficeret vobis lana & lac, ſititis enim ſanguinem. Quatuor tamen his qui præſunt in Eccleſia Dei neceſſaria eſſe præ omnibus reor; videlicet ut per oſtium intrent, ut in humilitate ſe contineant, avaritiam declinent, munditiam tam corde quam corpore ſervare ſtudeant. Sed quid prodeſt ſi canonice eligantur (quod eſt per oſtium intrare) & non canonice vivant? Dixit dominus ad duodecim, nonne ego vos duodecim elegi, & unus ex vobis diabolus eſt? Fratres, ſic facit Jeſus hodie, eligens ſibi multos Diabolos Epiſcopos. Ubi, proh dolor, reperiemus Epiſcopos, qui poſt adeptam dignitatem in humilitate ſe contineant? Nempe ſuperbia eis occaſio eſt, ut ad tantam dignitatem aſpirent, ut in ovile Chriſti impudenter irrumpant, cum tamen Dominus per Pſalmiſtam dicat, non habitabit in medio domus meæ qui facit ſuperbiam. — Amant & faciunt ſuperbiam, Parentes ſuos Extollentes, pauperes

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autem negligentes, & deprimentes. Male vivunt, & ſubjectos male vivere volunt. Et idcirco comparantur Apoſtatæ Angelo, qui dixit in corde ſuo, Ponam ſedem meam ad Aquilonem. Quid eſt Diabolum ad Aquilonem ſedem velle ponere, niſi ſuperbum quempiam, & impium ſuper ſuos ſimiles a Charitatis calore, vel ſapientiæ luce alienos, principatum appetere, vel adeptum tenere? Talis erat *Abſalom* ſuper filios Iſrael, patri rebellis & principatum appetens. Talis *Jeroboam*, qui peccavit, & peccare fecit filios Iſrael in vitulis aureis. Tales Scribæ & Phariſæi, contra quos ait Dominus: Væ vobis Scribæ & Phariſæi, qui clauditis regnum cœlorum ante homines; vos enim non intratis, & introeuntes non finitis introire. Porro Epiſcopi hujus temporis avaritiam quomodo declinent? Quod enim ſine miſerabili gemitu dicendum non eſt, Chriſti opprobria, ſputa, flagella, clavos, lanceam, crucem & mortem, hæc omnia in fornace avaritiæ conflant, & profligant in acquiſitionem turpis quæſtus, & pretium univerſitatis ſuis marſupiis includere feſtinant; hoc ſolo ſane a Juda Iſcariotis differentes quod ille horum omne emolumentum denariorum numero compenſavit, iſti voraciore ingluvie lucrorum, infinitas exigunt pecunias. His inſatiabili deſiderio inhiant, pro his ne amittant timent, & cum amittunt, dolent. Harum in amore quieſcunt. —— Animarum nec caſus reputatur, nec ſalus. —— Cum ſint de crucifixi patrimonio incraſſati, impinguati, dilatati, non compatiuntur ſuper contritione Joſeph. Archipresbyter circuit obedientiam ſibi creditam, & ut impleat ſaccum ſuum, tradit ſanguinem juſtum. Vendit nempe homicidia, adulteria, inceſtus, fornicationes, ſacrilegia, perjuria, & uſq; ad ſummum implet manticam ſuam. Fama igitur volante innoteſcit Epiſcopo talis quæſtus, & accerſito Archipresbytero, Da mihi inquit, partem meam. At ille, nihil dabo tibi: E contra Epiſcopus, ſi non dederis mihi, inquit, partem meam, auferam tibi omnia. Fitq; altercatio maxima, & propter avaritiam ſit diſcordia. Poſtea vero Archipresbyter revolvens ſecum, quod auctoritate Epiſcopi fungatur poteſtate iſta, & quod ſine gratia ipſius nihil poſſit, perverſe converſus, pæniter, inquit, me, accipe partem tuam, & inſuper de mea quod beneplacitum fuerit & reconciliantur. Heu! ſicut Herodes & Pilatus reconciliati ſunt, & Chriſtus crucifixus eſt; ſic nihilo minus iſti reconciliantur, & pauperes Chriſti ſpoliati ſunt. —— Væ generationi huic a fermento Phariſæorum, quod eſt hypocriſis, ſi tamen hypocriſis dici debet, quæ jam latere præ abundantia non valet, & præ impudentia non quærit. Et ſic ſerpit hodie putrida tabes, per omne corpus Eccleſiæ, eo deſperatius, eoq; perculoſius quo inteſtinius. Nam ſi aſſurgeret apertus Hæreticus, mitteretur foras, & areſceret; ſi violentus inimicus, abſconderet ſe quis forſan ab eo. Nunc quomodo ejiciet, aut quomodo abſcondet ſe? Omnes amici & inimici; omnes neceſſarii, omnes domeſtici, & nulli pacifici; Miniſtri Chriſti ſunt, & ſervitus Antichriſto; honorati incedunt de bonis domini, cui honorem non deferunt: Unde hinc eſt eis quem quotidie videmus meretricius nitor, hiſtrionicus habitus, regius apparatus. Inde aurum in frænis, aurum in ſellis, & calcaribus. Plus nitent calcaria quàm altaria. Inde menſæ ſplendidæ & cibis & ſcyphis; Inde comeſtationes, & ebrietates. Inde Cythara & Lyra, & tibia, redundantia torcularia, & promptuaria plena. —— Hujuſmodi ſunt & volunt eſſe Eccleſiarum Præpoſiti, Decani, Epiſcopi & Archiepiſcopi. *Serm. ad Clerum in Concil. Rhemenſi Congregatum. vide Bernard. Op. Edit. Paris*, 1572. *Fol.* 403.

Spoilers of it; for we have very few that feed the Flock; alas! but a great many that Excommunicate them. I wiſh to God, you would but be ſatisfied with the Milk, and the Wooll, but ye thirſt after the very Blood of the Sheep. There are, as I take it, four things chiefly required in thoſe that are Governors over the Houſe of God; that they enter in by the Door, that they keep themſelves within the bounds of Humility, that they avoid Covetouſneſs, and that they preſerve themſelves pure and undefiled, both in Body and Spirit. Now, what ſignifies it for them

them to enter in by the Door, that is, to be canonically elected, unleſs they lead canonical Lives too? Jeſus Chriſt (we read) ſaid to his Diſciples, Have not I choſen you twelve, and one of you is a Devil? — *My Brethren, Jeſus Chriſt obſerves the ſame method ſtill, he chuſes many Biſhops that are Devils. Where, alas! ſhall we meet with any Biſhops, who after their Promotion, keep themſelves within the Bounds of Humility? Pride is the very thing that puts them upon ſeeking this Dignity, and makes them impudently intrude into the Lords Sheepfold, when yet the Lord ſays by his Prophet,* He that is of a proud heart, ſhall not dwell in my houſe, *Pſ.* 101. — *They are haughty and inſolent, they prefer their Relations, and ſet them on high, but the Poor they utterly neglect. They lead ill Lives themſelves, and are deſirous that all under their Government ſhould lead as bad as they; in this they reſemble the Apoſtate Angel, who ſaid in his heart,* I will ſit in the ſides of the North, *Iſa.* 14. 13. *What is the meaning of the Devils* ſitting in the ſides of the North; *but a proud, ungodly deſire of ruling, and domineering over his equals, over thoſe that like him, have neither the light of Wiſdom, nor the warmth of Charity. Such a one was* Abſalom, *who deſired to reign over the Children of* Iſrael. *Such was* Jeroboam, *who both ſinned himſelf, and made* Iſrael *to ſin. Such were the Scribes and Phariſees, againſt whom our Saviour denounced a Curſe;* Wo unto you Scribes and Phariſees, for ye ſhut the kingdom of Heaven againſt men: ye enter not in your ſelves, and thoſe that would enter in, ye hinder, *Matt.* 23. *If now we come to conſider the avarice of our modern Biſhops, that is not to be mentioned without a deep ſorrow and real concern. They raiſe to themſelves a diſhoneſt gain from the ſcandal of Chriſt, and the ignominy he endured; his Spittings, his Scourges, his Nails, his Spear, his Croſs, and his Death. They greedily ſweep into their own Purſes the price that was paid for the redemption of the World; and the difference between them and* Judas *is only this, that* Judas *ſold all this for a few pence, but theſe ſordid and inſatiable wretches make vaſt ſums of it. — All their care is to heap up riches, all their fear is, that theſe ſhould be loſt, and the loſs of them is the only thing that can affect them with ſorrow. As for the Souls of men, let them be ſaved, or damned, they trouble not themſelves about either; but grow fat, and big, and ſwell to a prodigious bulk with the patrimony of the Crucified Jeſus, and never lament for the breaches of* Joſeph. *The Archprieſt makes his Circular Viſitation, as enjoyned, and that he may fill his own Bags, he betrays innocent blood; he ſells and commutes for Murders, for Inceſts, for Fornications, Sacriledg and Perjury, and this courſe he takes to cram his Chefts to the very lid. The Biſhop, having intelligence of this, ſends for his Arch-prieſt, and demands his ſhare of the Money. The Arch-prieſt denies to give him any. The Biſhop threatens then to take it all. Hence ariſes a hot diſpute, and difference between them. The Arch-prieſt, conſidering at laſt, that his Office is executed by an Authority derived from the Biſhop, and depends upon his*

his favour, finds it neceſſary to maintain a good Correſpondence, and therefore repents, and entreats him, not only to take his proportion, but what he pleaſed more ſhould be at his ſervice. Thus they come to a reconciliation. And thus alas! Herod *and* Pilate *were reconciled, they Crucified Jeſus upon it, and theſe fleece his poor members upon theirs.* —— Wo to this Generation, becauſe of the leaven of the Phariſees, which is hypocriſy; *if yet a Man ought to call that Hypocriſy, which is ſo rife, that it cannot; and ſo ſhameleſs, that it does not deſire to be hid. Thus the Corruption gains ground dayly, and ſpreads over the whole Body of the Church, ſo much the more pernicious and deſperate, as it advances nearer to the vitals, and is more inward and unſeen. If a Heretick openly declare himſelf, he is preſently thruſt from our Communion, and like the rotten branch, caſt out, and withers away; or if an enemy make any publick oppoſition, men might hide themſelves from him; but in this caſe ſuch remedies cannot be uſed; all pretend to be friends, and yet are enemies; all dwell like the ſame family together, and all are at war with each other; they ſeem Miniſters of Chriſt, and yet ſerve Antichriſt; they are honoured with the Goods and poſſeſſions of that Lord, whom they in their practices continually diſhonour. Hence proceeds that affected trimneſs of the Harlot, that gay dreſs of the Player, that ſtate of a Prince. Hence their gold Bridles, embroidered Saddles, and glittering Spurs, for their very Spurs are richer and more magnificent than their Altars. Hence their full Tables, their Cupboards of Plate, their noble Entertainments, their Muſick and Collations, their Preſſes running over with Wine, and their Granaries full of Corn. Such are nowadays, our Eccleſiaſtical Governors, our Deans, Biſhops, and Archbiſhops, and this is the figure they delight to make.*

What I pray was become of this ſtrength of the Miniſtry, when *Alvarez Pelagius* gave the following Deſcription of the Church in his time? *Lam.* 5. 2. * Our Inheritance is turned to Strangers; *that is, our Inheritance of Inno-*

*Innocentiæ hæreditas & virtutum verſa eſt ad alienos, id eſt Laicos, reſpectu Clericorum ab Eccleſia alienos, qui hodie communiter innocentiores, & virtuoſiores ſunt Clericis. Hodie enim vere quaſi ſancti ſunt Laici reſpectu Clericorum. Et in dei Judicio ſurgent Laici cum generatione iſta Clericorum & Religioſorum; & condemnabunt eos comparationæ vitæ, —— ſicut exponit Hieron. Matt. 12. de Ninivitis & Regina Saba Condemnantibus Judæos in die Judicii. *Domus noſtra ad extraneos.* Eccleſiæ factæ ſunt habitatio incredulorum, a fide Extraneorum. *Pupilli facti ſumus abſq; patre,* quia vere Prælati Eccleſiæ patres vocantur, ſed vere communiter in effectu patres non ſunt, qui inutiles ſunt; & non refert vel prælatum non habere, vel inutilem, vel malum. Non omnes Epiſcopi ſunt Epiſcopi, multi ſacerdotes, & pauci ſacerdotes. Jam non ſecundus ſed nullus eſt. Et qui inhabilis eſt ad agendum, nullus. Quomodo enim vocantur Patres, qui nec ſua peccata detergunt, nec filiorum crimen corrigant? Tales magis canes impudici, quam patres & Epiſcopi appellandi. Quum & parentes filiis theſauros theſaurizare debeant, quomodo parentes ſunt prælati, qui tota die ſuos excoriant ſubditos? Indurantur enim prælati parentes ad filios ſubditos. *Matres noſtræ,* &c. Mater Eccleſia quaſi vidua eſt, filiis in peccato mortuis viduata, & quod quaſi vidua malos prælatos habens. *Alvarez. Pelagius de Planctu Eccleſ. lib. 2. cap. 2. Edit. Venet.* 1569.

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cence and Virtue, is past to the Laity, who in comparison of the Clergy are but as Strangers to the Church, and they are commonly now-a-days more Innocent and Virtuous than the Clergy. For the rest are perfect Saints in comparison of some Ecclesiasticks. They shall rise in Judgment against the Clergy, and Religious Orders of this Generation, and shall condemn them, by the comparing of their lives together, as Jesus Christ told the Jews, *the* Ninivites *and Queen of* Sheba *should do by them.* Ibid. *Vers.* 2. Our Houses to aliens; *that is, our Churches are become the Habitation of Infidels, and such as are strangers to the Faith. Vers.* 3. We are Orphans and Fatherless. *Our Prelates, who are indeed stiled the Fathers of the Church, yet are not really, and indeed Fathers. They are useless and unprofitable men; and to have wicked, and unprofitable Prelates, is the same thing, as if we had none at all. All are not Bishops, that have the title of Bishops. There are many Priests, and yet there are but few; we can not now say one or two, but not any at all; for whosoever is uncapable, or unactive in his station, does not deserve to be reckoned for any at all. How shall we call those men our Fathers, who take no care either to amend themselves, or correct their Children? These deserve the opprobrious name of shameless Dogs, better than that honourable one of Bishops.* Fathers, *the Scripture says,* ought to lay up for their Children; *but instead of that, the Prelates daily strip, and flea their Subjects, and harden themselves against them, as if they were Subjects, and slaves, and not Children.* Vers. 3. Our Mother *the Church,* is a Widow and Childless, *for her Children are dead in Sin, and having no Husbands but wicked Prelates, it is all one as if she had none, and so a Widow.*

Where was this strength of the Ministry, when *Æneas Silvius* wrote thus to one of his Friends, upon occasion of the Confusions and differences between the Council of *Basil*, and Pope *Eugenius*. *I think* Charles *the* French *King hath shewn an easy and sure way of quieting this Evil, which is, to contrive a meeting of the Princes, or their Deputies, in some convenient place, and that all should stick to what they shall resolve upon. To effect this, all the Kings must be written to, and all the Princes, and desired to*

∴ Viam sopiendi hoc malum Carolus Rex Franciæ nisi fallor

& tutam, & brevem ostendit, ut fiat conventus Principum, vel eorum Oratorum, in communi aliquo loco, ibiq; una recipiatur Conclusio per omnes. Ad hoc autem peragendum opus esset rursus scribere cunctis Regibus, principibusq;, ut Oratores suos Argentinum vel Constantiam mitterent, pleno mandato suffultos, ad pacem Ecclesiæ pertractandam. Fienda esset rursus expensa.—— Paulo plus Constantinus in Congregatione Niceni Concilii exposuit. Hæc via non possit impediri, nec Papa vel Concilium reniti possent, tanquam hoc absq; ipsis fieri nequiret. Licet enim principibus secularibus convenire invito Clero, & tamen illic unio fieri posset. Nam ille Papa indubitatus esset, cui omnes principes obedirent. Non video Clericos, qui velint pro ista vel illa parte martyrium ferre. Omnes hanc fidem habemus, quam nostri principes, qui si colerent idola, & nos etiam coleremus. Et non solum Papam, sed Christum etiam negaremus seculari potestate urgente. Quia refriguit Charitas, & omnis interiit fides; utcunque sit, pacem desideravimus, quæ sive per aliud Concilium, sive per conventum principum detur, nihili pendo. *Æneas Silv. Epist. Lib.* 1. *Epist.* 54. *Pag.* 539. *Edit. Basil.*

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ſend their Repreſentatives to Stratsburg, *or* Conſtance, *with full power and inſtructions to treat of whatever ſhall concern the peace of the Church. This will draw ſome expence upon him — but* Conſtantine *was at more for convening the Council of* Nice. *This is an eaſy expedient, and cannot be oppoſed, either by the Pope or Council, upon pretence ſuch a thing is not to be done without them; for Princes may meet, whether the Clergy agree to it or no; and what perſon ſoever the Princes conſent to own for Pope, will be Pope without diſpute. I do not find any of the Clergy inclinable to ſuffer Martyrdom for either ſide of the Cauſe. We are juſt of our Princes Religion, if they worſhip Idols, we ſhould do ſo for company, and not only deny the Pope, but renounce Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, if the ſecular Powers urged us to it. Charity is cold, and all Faith perfectly dead; give us but peace, and we care not from what hand it comes, whether a Council, or an Aſſembly of temporal Princes convey it to us.*

What ſtrength had the Miniſtry left, when a good honeſt Biſhop, that lived in the beginning of the Reformation, drew the Clergy of that Age, in ſuch Colours as theſe? * *Jeſus Chriſt made the Eccleſiaſticks fiſhers of men, but in theſe times they fiſh not for men, but for honours and preferments. Upon which account* Catherina Senenſis *ſays of the Clergy of this Age,* "That they are unhappy men, addicted to their worldly intereſts, blinded "for, and with their ſins, Lovers of themſelves, but utterly without any con- "cern or affection for God and their neighbour; They are grown worſe than the "Laity, whom they draw along into the ſame ſnare of perdition. They ſuck "out all the Milk and Blood of the Church, converting upon themſelves all that "tenderneſs they ought to have for her. They get out of her the Benefices, the Penſions, the Revenues, and all that; and theſe they lay upon their pleaſures, and their ſins, without taking any manner of care for the Salvation of her Mem-

* Chriſtus fecit piſcatores hominum; ſacerdotes autem hodie non piſcantur homines, ſed honores, unde in Catherina Senenſi ſequitur. *Moderni & infælices Clerici temporalibus incumbentes ob eorum malitiam luce divina privati, ſeipſos amant, Dei & proximi dilectionem negligunt, deteriores ſunt ſæcularibus, quos una ſecum perdunt; ſanguinem & lac ſugunt ex medulla Eccleſiæ, ut ipſa palleat; affectum nempe Charitatis, qua Eccleſiam afficere deberent, ad ſemitipſos retorquent.* Ab ea enim eliciunt beneficia, penſiones, cenſus, & cætera; deliciis & flagitiis dediti, ſalutem & curam membrorum Eccleſiæ, id eſt, animarum Chriſti fidelium negligunt. Ob ejuſmodi reproborum Clericorum vitam ſæculares veniunt ad inobedientiam & irreverentiam Eccleſiæ. Quinimo ſeducuntur a cæcis ducibus, qui, pro pudor! ſunt ignavi idiotæ, præſumptuoſi, hypocritæ, avari, ſimoniaci, luxurioſi, invidi, tardi ad bona opera, proni ad mala, poſt temporalia currentes; deberent eſſe lapides, ſed dicuntur diſperſi lapides ſanctuarii. ——— In conviviis, tabernis, ludis, & theatris ubique vagantes crebrius reperiuntur, quam in locis Deo dicatis. Quam pernicioſa autem & impertinens ſit univerſali Eccleſiæ Clericorum ſcurrilitas, ignorantia, fornicatio, ſimonia, aliaque crimina, (quibus totus pene clerus eſt infectus) nemo ambigit. *Onus Eccleſiæ, Cap.* 23. *Edit. Anno.* 1620. This Book was written in the year 1519. two years after *Luther* began to oppoſe the Papal Indulgences, and printed firſt in the year 1531.

bers, the Souls of the Faithful that belong to Jesus Christ. By reason of this scandalous behaviour in the Clergy, the Laity throw off all obedience and respect for the Church; or rather, they are indeed seduced, and enticed to sin with those blind Guides, that are, to their shame be it spoken, ignorant, presumptuous, hypocritical, covetous, simoniacal, luxurious, envious fellows, backward to all good, and always ready to commit evil; Thus, while they run up and down at this rate after the things of this World, they are not, as they ought to be, the Corner-stones, but the dispersed and scattered rubbish of the Sanctuary — You shall find them at Feasts, in Taverns, at Plays, and in places of publick Entertainment, and running from one of these to the other, through every street in the Town, more frequently than in the places devoted to God's Worship and Service. In a word, No body can think otherwise, but that this scandalous lewd Conversation, this Ignorance, Fornication, Simony, and other Vices (with which the Clergy are almost universally tainted) is very disadvantagious, and destructive to the whole Church.

Where, I beseech you, shall we find that strength of the Ministry, upon which *M. de Meaux* pretends, that Jesus Christ hath founded his Church, in those times, which extorted even from *Baronius* himself the following Complaints? † *St.* Peter's *little Ship was certainly never in such evident danger, nor so near being cast away, as when tost with the storms that rose against her in this* (he means the Tenth) *Age. Whatever she had formerly endured under Heathen Emperors, whatever inconveniencies the Hereticks, Schismaticks, and all other Persecutors brought upon her, was but childs play, compared to what she now underwent. Those former sufferings were her gain and advantage, and the mighty victories she obtained over wickedness, and cruelty, were so many fresh additions to her beauty, greatness, and honour. But you will say, what could these evils be, and whence could this horrible tempest arise? They*

† Navicula Petri certe quidem in nullo unquam graviori visa est versari discrimine nec manifestiori pereundi

penitus constituta periculo, quam cum ingruentibus sæculo isto est jactata procellis: nam cuncta quæ olim passa est sub Gentilibus Imperatoribus, vel quæ ab Hæreticis sive Schismaticis, aliisve quibuscunq; Persecutoribus, horum comparatione sunt æstimanda lusus quodammodo puerorum, imo referenda in lucrum, & computanda in certum emolumentum, cum ex illis ipsa Ecclesia effecta sit pulchrior, aucta amplior, atq, reddita glorioſior, dum egregium semper revexerit de impietate prostrata triumphum. At quænam mala ista dices, & unde tanta omnium acerbissima tempestas exorta? Est plane, ut vix aliquis credat, imo nec vix quidem sit creditur us, nisi suis inspiciat ipse oculis, manibusque contrecter, quam indigna, quamq; turpia atq; deformia, execranda insuper, & abominanda, sit coacta pati sacrosancta Apostolica sedes, in cujus Cardine universa Ecclesia vertitur; cum principes sæculi hujus quantumlibet Christiani, hac tamen ex parte dicendi Tyranni sævissimi, arrogaverunt sibi tyrannice electionem Romanorum Pontificum. Quot tunc ab eis, proh pudor! proh dolor! in eandem sedem, Angelis reverendam, visu horrenda intrusa sunt monstra? Quot ex eis oborta sunt mala, consummatæ tragædiæ? Quibus tunc ipsam sine macula & ruga contigit aspergi sordibus, putoribus infici, inquinari spuritiis, ex hisq; perpetua infamia denigrari? *Baron.* ad Ann. 900. *Ant.*

are such as will scarcely be credited, nay could never be believed, unless a man had almost the evidence of sense to convince him; except he did, if I may so say, see, and feel the unworthy, vile, dirty, horrible, cursed, abominable things that were put upon the Apostolick See; that See which is as it were the hinge upon which the whole Church hangs and turns. When the Princes of this Age, Christians 'tis true, but in this respect most barbarous Tyrants, arrogated to themselves a power to chuse the Pope of Rome, *what monsters of men, alas, were then thrust into that Holy Chair, which even Angels reverence! What horrid Crimes did they commit? What Tragical Spectacles did they shew the world? With what filth, pollution and villany was that Spouse besmeared, and with what eternal infamy blackned, who is without wrinkle, or without spot?*

Where, pray, was the strength of this Stone in those times, when *Arnulph* Bishop of *Orleans* delivered himself thus, in a Council held at *Rheims*, in the year 992. * *What have we not seen in our days? We have seen one* John, *whose name was* Octavian, *a man debauched with all manner of Vice and wickedness, who conspired against* Otho, *whom he had formerly Crown'd Emperor himself. This man was forced to flee, and one* Leo Neophytus *was put in his place. But no sooner was* Otho *gone from* Rome, *but* Octavian *returns, expells* Leo, *cuts off the Nose, Hands, and Tongue of* John *the Cardinal-Deacon, and fills the whole City with the blood of people of quality. Presently after he died, and a Deacon, one* Benedict, *was set up to succeed him.* Leo *returns with the Emperor, attacks this* Benedict, *besieges, takes, and deposes him, and banishes him for ever into* Germany. *Another* Otho *succeeds in the Empire, who for Arms, Policy, and Wisdom, was the greatest Prince in the world: And a horrid Monster, one* Boniface, *succeeded in the Popedom, who was as much the greatest man in the world for wickedness and villany; and had a hand in his Predecessors death. He was also expelled and condemned in a full Synod, but after* Otho's *death returned to* Rome, *thrust out* Peter, *an Apostolick man, who was then in the Papal Chair, deposed him, and after long imprisonment, brought him to a miserable death. And can we suppose now, that*

* Quid sub hæc tempora non vidimus? Vidimus Joannem cognomento Octavianum in volutabro libidinum, etiam contra eum Ottonem, quem Augustum creaverat, conjurasse, quo fugato, Leo Neophytus in Pontificem creatur; sed Ottone Cæsare Roma discedente, Octavianus Romam redit, Leonem fugat, Joannem diaconum, naso, dextrisq; digitis, ac lingua mutilat, multaq; cœde primorum in urbe debacchatus, in brevi moritur. Cui Benedictum diaconum, cognomento Grammaticum Romani substituunt. Eum quoq; Leo Neophytus cum suo Cæsare non multo post aggreditur, obsidet, capit, deponit, perpetuoq; exilio in Germaniam dirigit.

Succedit Ottoni Cæsari *Cæsar Otto*, natura, ætate, cunctos principes armis, consilio & scientia superans. Succedit Romæ in Pontificatu horrendum monstrum *Malefacius* cunctos mortales nequitia superans, etiam prioris Pontificis sanguine cruentus. Sed hic etiam fugatus & in magna Synodo damnatus est. Post obitum divi Ottonis Romam redit, insignem virum Apostolicum Petrum, Papiensis Ecclesiæ prius Antistitem, data Sacramentorum fide, ab arce Urbis dejicit, deponit, squalore carceris affectum perimit. Num talibus monstris hominum ignominia plenis, scientia humanarum & divinarum rerum vacuis, innumeros sacerdotes Dei per orbem terrarum scientiæ & vitæ merito conspicuos subjici decretum est? *Baron.* ad Ann. 992.

an infinite company of God's Miniſters, diſperſt over the whole Earth, and eminent both for Learning and Holineſs of Life, were ever deſigned to be ſubject to ſuch fellows as theſe, ſo ſcandalous for their corrupt converſations, and for their abominable ignorance in all things both Divine and Humane?

What ſtrength had this Stone left, when the diſorders in the Church grew to ſuch a height, as forced *Adrian* the Sixth to that ingenuous Confeſſion in the Diet at *Nuremberg*, an account whereof we meet with in *Rainaldus*, * *We ingenuouſly acknowledg*, ſays he, *that God hath ſuffered this Perſecution and Confuſion to happen upon the Church, becauſe of the Sins of Men; eſpecially, of the Prieſts and Prelates. It is ſure*, the Lords hand is not ſhortned, that it cannot ſave; but our iniquities have ſeparated between us and him; and made him hide his face from us, that he will not hear. *The Scriptures cry aloud, that the ſins of the people proceed from the miſcarriages of the Prieſts*, Iſa. 9. 1, 2. *and for this reaſon, as St.* Chryſoſtom *ſays, Our Lord when he went about to heal* Jeruſalem *that was ſick, entred firſt of all into the Temple, to drive out from thence the Prieſts ſins; acting herein like a good Phyſician, that begins at the very root of the diſeaſe. We are ſenſible, that for ſome years ſince, ſome abominations have been committed even in this holy See, many abuſes in ſpiritual things, many tranſgreſſions of the Commandments, and that all things have been turned to the worſe. 'Tis no wonder therefore, that the infirmity ſhould be paſſed from the head to the members, from the Popes to the inferior Prelates. We all of us, both Prelates and ſubordinate Clergy, have*

* Item dices nos ingenue fateri, quod Deus hanc perſecutionem Eccleſiæ ſuæ inferri permittit, propter peccata hominum, maxime ſacerdotum, & Eccleſiæ prælatorum. Certum enim eſt, non eſſe abbreviatam manum Domini, ut ſalvare nequeat, ſed peccata dividere inter nos & ipſum, & abſcondere faciem ſuam a nobis, ut non exaudiet. Clamant Scripturæ, peccata populi derivari a peccatis ſacerdotum; propterea; ut ait Chryſoſtomus, ſalvator noſter curaturus infirmam civitatem Jeruſalem, ingreſſus eſt prius templum, ut peccata ſacerdotum primo caſtigaret; inſtar boni medici, qui morbum a radice curat. Scimus in hac ſancta ſede aliquot jam annis multa abominanda fuiſſe, abuſus in ſpiritualibus, exceſſus in mandatis, & omnia deniq; in perverſum mutata. ——Nec mirum ſi ægritudo a capite in membra, a ſummis Pontificibus in inferiores prælatos deſcenderit. Omnes nos (id eſt, prælati) & Eccleſiaſtici declinavimus unuſquiſq; in vias ſuas, nec fuit jamdiu qui faceret bonum, non fuit uſq; ad unum. Quamobrem neceſſe eſt, ut omnes demus gloriam Deo, & humiliemus animas noſtras ei, videatq; unuſquiſq; noſtrum unde ceciderit, & ſe potius quilibet judicet, quam a Deo in virga furoris judicari velit. Qua in re, quod ad nos attinet, polliceberis nos omnem operam adhibituros, ut primum Curia hæc, unde forte omne hoc malum proceſſerit, reformetur; ut ſicut inde Corruptio in omnes inferiores emanavit, ita etiam ab eadem ſanitas & reformatio omnium emanet. Ad quod procurandum nos tanto arctius obligatos reputamus, quanto univerſum mundum hujuſmodi reformationem avidius deſiderare videmus. *Rainald.* Annal. Tom. 20. Edit. Romæ 1663. in *Adrian.* 6. ad Ann. 1522. Parag. 70. *Theſe are part of the Inſtructions given by the Pope to* Franceſco Chiericato, *Biſhop of* Fabriano, *and Nuncio to the Diet; and becauſe* Rainaldus *may not be eaſily met with, the Reader would not do amiſs, to ſee the account Father* Paul *gives of this in his firſt Book of the Hiſtory of the Council of* Trent, *which agrees ſo exactly with* Rainaldus, *that I have tranſcribed moſt part of this quotation, out of Mr.* Brent's *Tranſlation*, Page 25, 26.

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gone aside every one to his own ways; in so much, that for some time, there hath been none that hath done good, no not one. We ought to give this Glory to God, and humble our Souls before him. Therefore let every one of us consider from whence he is fallen, and each Man judge himself, not expecting till God judge and visit us with the rod of his fury. We, for our own part, promise to employ all our wit, and use all diligence, that the Court of Rome, *from whence, peradventure, all this mischief proceeded, should be Reformed first of all: that so, as from her the Corruption was derived down to other parts below, so Health and Reformation may likewise come down from her upon all. Which we the rather think our selves obliged to do, because we see that all the World doth earnestly desire such a Reformation.*

But what ground then hath M. *de Meaux* for this pretended strength of the Ministry, and the Court of *Rome?* This he hath; That it is observable, Jesus Christ did not promise that *Hell should not prevail against the Church,* till he first had said, *Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build my Church:* And that, immediately after he adds, *I will give unto thee the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven.* He hath this ground likewise; That Jesus Christ did not say, *I am with you alway, even unto the end of the World;* but only to those whom he before empowered with this Commission, *Teach and Baptise;* whereunto he adds a passage out of St. *Cyprian,* the substance whereof is, That *the Church is the people united with their Bishop, and the Flock joyn'd to their Pastor.* Eng. Refl. page 114.

M. *de Meaux* must repose a mighty confidence in the strength of his own Observations, to think they ought to weigh more than plain experimental proofs, which he is sufficiently acquainted with, and knows we are not ignorant of our selves. What? Because Jesus Christ speaks of his Church, and represents it to us under the notion of a building, we must presently look upon the antecedent and subsequent parts of that discourse, to be like the two walls which support the House in the middle. 'Tis a pretty conceit, I confess, but he must pardon me, if I tell him, 'tis not very conclusive in a Dispute, nor hath Argument enough to prevail upon us to forego matters of fact to the contrary. Jesus Christ might have promised, that he would build his Church upon this Rock, That is, upon this Confession made by St. *Peter* just before, as most of the Fathers have interpreted it. He might have promised to give him the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, That is, that he would make use of him as an instrument to begin the Preaching of the Gospel, and the Conversion of the People; he might, I say, have promised these things, and yet neither the one, nor the other of these two clauses have any necessary connexion with that in the middle, which is his promise of Victory over Hell, by such a mutual Relation as M. *de Meaux* endea-

vours to give them. This first Argument then is a little too weak and slender to establish that assertion, *viz.* That Jesus Christ hath placed the Churches strength chiefly in the Ministry.

The second hath not much more substance in it neither; Jesus Christ said to his Disciples, *Go, teach all Nations, baptizing them in the name of the father, and of the son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world*; Therefore he hath placed the Churches strength chiefly in the Ministry. This Consequence is forced and unnatural, and there is a great deal more reason to infer from hence, that he hath on the contrary placed the strength of the Ministry in the Church. *Teach, and baptize the nations, appointing them to observe whatsoever I have commanded you*, this does primarily respect the personal Ministry of the Apostles themselves, and signifies that Collection they were to make of the Christian Church. *I am with you unto the end of the world*, this principally regards the Body of the Christian Church, already gathered together by the Apostles, as is evident from those words, *To the end of the world*; and thus Jesus Christ himself hath explained his own meaning in the Seventeenth of St. *John*, *Neither pray I for these alone*, says he, *but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.* Jesus Christ gives his Apostles a charge to collect the Church, and then he promises that Church, to continue with it even unto the end of the World.

Matth. 28. 19, 20.

Joh. 17. 20.

But may some object, *This Church thus assembled must have an ordinary settled Ministry.* Yes, it must so. *Then he promises to preserve this Ministry uninterrupted to the end of the World.* I answer, He promises to preserve the right of it inviolate to his Church, so that it shall never be taken away from her. Let us say, if you will, that he promises to maintain her in the constant Possession of it. *There will always be a Church then, with which Jesus Christ will be, with which he will teach, with which he will baptise without Interruption, even unto the end of World.* Right, there will so. *Then the Succession and Perpetuity of the Ministry, is included in this promise.* I acknowledg all that too. *It is then in the Ministry chiefly, that Jesus Christ fixes the strength, and everlasting continuance of his Church.* This is what I deny, and M. *de Meaux* will not be able to prove, Jesus Christ preserves his Church, and for the sake of his Church he preserves the Ministry; but that he does not likewise preserve the Ministry by his Church, that is, by that right of Vocation, which is originally in the Body of his Faithful, and by the use which this Body of his Faithful shall make of such right, is what neither is, nor can be inferred from Jesus Christs words.

M. *de*

M. *de Meaux* is too far prepoſſeſt with his own private Notions, and that hinders him from diſcerning, where the difficulty of the Point in Controverſy lies. The Church, and the Miniſtry, are two things join'd together, we own it. But he would perſwade us, that the Church depends upon the Miniſtry, as a Rivulet does upon its Spring; and we on the contrary are of Opinion, that the ordinary Miniſtry depends upon the Church, as an effect depends upon its productive Cauſe. We can eaſily conceive the extraordinary Miniſtry of Jeſus Chriſt, and his Apoſtles, as the Source and Fountain from whence the Chriſtian Church is derived; but ſince the time of the Church's being eſtabliſhed, we conceive her as veſted with a right of the ordinary Miniſtry; and conſequently, as having within her ſelf the Root and Principle of the Vocation thereunto. And becauſe Infallibility ſtopt at the Apoſtles, and the ordinary Miniſters may be elected out of worldly Men and Hypocrites, that are Members of the exterior Profeſſion; we look upon their Miniſtry to be liable to very grievous Corruptions, and conſequently, to mighty Changes and Revolutions. But yet we think it perpetual too for all that, by virtue of Jeſus Chriſt's Promiſes, and that upon theſe three accounts. Firſt, becauſe the Church muſt ſubſiſt always, and therefore this right or root of the Miniſtry, muſt always continue in her too, becauſe it is ſuch a right, as can never be loſt. Secondly, becauſe Almighty God by his Providence does ſtop and moderate the Torrent of Corruption, ſo far as he ſees fit; he preſcribes bounds to it, and prevents its proceeding to ſuch a degree, as would quite extinguiſh the Miniſtry, and this in the very hands of the men in Poſſeſſion of it; ſo we think he did before the Reformation. Thirdly, becauſe even then, when he ſuffers the Corruption to prevail ſo far, that men deprive themſelves, by their extravagances, of the Miniſtry committed to them, he does ſtill ſtir up ſome, even among theſe in Poſſeſſion, that ſhall diſcharge their Duty, and be that reſidue mentioned by *Gregory Nazianzene*, in the Paſſage cited out of him before. This is the Point M. *de Meaux* ſhould have appli'd himſelf to, this he ought to diſpute againſt, or at leaſt eſtabliſh the contrary by Arguments that have ſome Life in them, and not inſiſt upon pitiful little Obſervations, which will never do him any Credit.

But ſhould he once have come to engage in this undertaking, he would quickly have found it harder to compaſs, than he thinks for; becauſe indeed all our Principles are founded upon unqueſtionable Truths. That the ordinary Miniſtry is the Churches, and depends upon the Church, is what Reaſon, Scripture, and the Fathers teach us, as I have made appear ſufficiently in the Defence of the Reformation. That Infallibility

fallibility ceaſed with the Apoſtles, is what I have likewiſe proved in the ſame Book. That the Miniſtry may be committed to worldly Men and Hypocrites, is what Experience does but too evidently ſhew. That the Miniſtry, that is, the body or the major Part of the Clergy, are liable to be extremely corrupted, as well in matters of Doctrine, Worſhip and Diſcipline, as in regard of Morals, is what we are forced to acknowledg, whether we will or no; unleſs we will wink hard, and ſee nothing of all that Story concerning the *Arrian* Hereſy, that, concerning the debates about Images, and upon ſeveral other Occations. That God by his Almighty Providence, puts a ſtop to the growth of Corruption, and prevents its getting ſuch a Head as ſhould utterly deſtroy and ſtifle the Miniſtry, even in the very hands of thoſe Men that are actually poſſeſt of it, and abuſe it, is, what the Inſtances of the Prieſts and Levites, before Chriſts coming into the World; of the Phariſees and Scribes, at the time of his being in the World; and of the Biſhops that fell into the *Arrian* Hereſy, do all abundantly prove. Laſtly, That when the Body, the generality fall into Sin and Error, Gods does yet, even then, raiſe up ſome among the ordinary Miniſters to diſcharge their Duty, is likewiſe evidently demonſtrated by the Examples of St. *Athanaſius*, St. *Hilary*, and ſome few more, who boldly and bravely reſiſted the Majority of their Brethren, and without ever regarding their being branded with the name of Hereticks, and perſecuted as men that had cut themſelves off from all the World beſides; yet ſeparated for all that, and fixed their Eyes upon nothing but God, and his Truth.

If M. *de Meaux* pleaſe but to enquire diligently into theſe things, he will find that God hath not placed the ſtrength of his Church, neither in the Church it ſelf, nor in its Miniſtry, but in the conſtant watchful care of his own Providence, for *he is the keeper of Iſrael, that never ſlumbers nor ſleeps*. I confeſs indeed, The Miniſters are by the Inſtitution and Deſign of their Office, called to keep the Church; they are her Watchmen and Shepherds; and when they faithfully diſcharge the Truſt repoſed in them, the Station they are in, makes them become very powerful Inſtruments for the Preſervation of the Flock. But it ſometimes falls out, that they act quite contrary to what they ſhould do, that is, inſtead of keeping the Church, they betray it; and inſtead of edifying and ſetting up, they ruin and deſtroy it; and then the Dignity, and height of their Office, does but make the miſchief to be the greater. As for the Paſſage of St. *Cyprian*, which M. *de Meaux* pretends to make ſome advantage of; I will venture to ſay, That nothing could ever be urged more improperly. Some private Perſons in *Carthage*, fancying, tho without the leaſt ground, that St. *Cyprian* their Biſhop did not lead a good Life, without

Pſal. 121.

without any more ado ſeparated themſelves, and would communicate no longer, either with him, or any of the flock. One amongſt them, whoſe name was *Florentius*, wrote to St. *Cyprian*, and told him, that one part of the Church were ſcattered upon his account. St. *Cyprian* replies, That * *the men, who ſeparated from the flock, were not really of the Church; that when the multitude left Jeſus Chriſt, he turned about to his Apoſtles; and having ſaid*, What, and will ye alſo go away? *John 6. 67, 68. St.* Peter *in the name of the whole Church returns him this anſwer, Lord, to whom ſhall we go? Thou haſt the words of Eternal Life. Shewing hereby, that, although a rebellious multitude might deſert, yet the Church did not forſake Jeſus Chriſt, and that the Church is the People united with their Biſhop, and the Flock joyned to their Paſtors.*

* Nec patiatur Dominus triticum de area ſua diripi, ſed ſolæ poſſint paleæ de Eccleſia ſeparari.——Et Dominus quoq; in Evangelio, cum eum loquentem diſcipuli derelinquerent, converſus ad duodecim dixerit, Nunquid & vos vultis ire? Reſpondet ei Petrus, dicens, Domine ad quem ibimus? verba vitæ æternæ habes, & nos credimus, & cognovimus, quoniam tu es filius Dei vivi. Loquitur illic Petrus.—— Eccleſiæ nomine docens & oſtendens, quia etſi contumax ac ſuperba ob audire volentium multitudo diſcedat, Eccleſia tamen a Chriſto non recedit, & illi ſunt Eccleſia plebs ſacerdote adunata, & paſtori ſuo grex adhærens. *Cyprian.* Epiſt. 66. Edit. *Oxon.* 1682. Ep. 69. juxta Pamelium, & Rigaltium.

What relation hath all this to our buſineſs? It concerned a bare accuſation as to morals, an accuſation never proved, never brought to tryal, contradicted by the general teſtimony of the whole Flock; an accuſation that might have been decided by the uſual methods of Diſcipline. It is plain therefore, theſe men, who had been guilty of ſuch a raſh, heady ſeparation, could not be either the Church, or any part of the Church; and in this caſe the Church was the body of the people united with their Biſhop. But can M. *de Meaux* draw any compariſon betwixt us and thoſe men? Can he ſincerely and ſeriouſly affirm, that the behaviour of the Prelates in our Fathers times, was like St. *Cyprian*'s? Or let their behaviour and morals be what they would, can he ſay our Fathers ſeparated on that account? Does he think St. *Cyprian* would have liked it very well, that the people ſhould continue united with their Biſhop, tho that Biſhop had taught falſe Doctrine, and Excommunicated all that refuſed to believe and embrace it with him? Which way could this Saint ever have admitted ſuch a thought? He, who, on the contrary, was of opinion, people might and ought to ſeparate from their Biſhop, when the Biſhop had yielded to the violence of Perſecution, and in ſome meaſure been a partaker in the Idolatrous worſhip; he, who did not ſo much as acknowledg the Sacraments to be good and valid, when they were adminiſtred by Hereticks.

Eng. Refl. pag. 115. Object. 11. *But let us come to these true Believers of whom Mr.* Claude *brags to us. I am not contented to dispute with them the Power he hath given them to depose all their Pastors, and make others; I say, that these true Believers never were. There must notwithstanding, according to this Minister, have been true Believers, even in the bosom of the* Roman *Church: for since, according to his Doctrine, there must be acknowledged, without any Interruption, an Ecclesiastical Ministry, and an Exterior Profession, of which it might have been said, There are the true Believers; they were true Believers under that Ministry, and in that Profession, whence they went forth. I ask, Did they Communicate in the Sacrifice where Saints are Invocated, where their Relicks and Images are honoured, where the Pope is named as the Head of the Orthodox; where Jesus Christ is adored as present in body and soul; where he is offered, where the Holy Sacrament is received under one kind? Not to communicate in this Sacrifice, and to refuse the receiving of the Eucharist there, were manifestly to separate; and they are supposed not to have done that yet: But if they communicated there, continuing true Believers; in what an Error are now all our Reformed, who believe not themselves to have been true Believers, till since they left communicating there? Thus these true Believers are people in the Air; these Seven thousand, so much bragg'd of, in the new Reformation, and by Mr.* Claude, *are so far from appearing, that they are not in nature, since before the separation there was not any one who communicated not in the Sacrifice and Host, which our Reformed look on as* Baal, *before whom one must not bow the knee.*

Answ. This scruple hath been resolved a Hundred times already, as fully as any Man in reason and equity can desire: But the *Romanists* objections are like the Leaves of Trees that fall off and wither every year, and every year sprout out afresh. Let us suppose a Man that is not satisfied in the truth of what God told *Elias*, about the time of those grievous corruptions under *Ahaz* and *Jezebel*, *That he had reserved to himself seven thousand, which had not bowed the knee to Baal*, he would put exactly the same question to M. *de Meaux*, that M. *de Meaux* does to us here: Did these Seven thousand communicate in those publick Sacrifices where *Baal* was worshipped, or did they not? For if they did not communicate in them, if they positively refused to partake in them, this were manifestly to separate, and they are supposed not to have done that yet; seeing *Elias* professes he knew no such thing, *I only am left alone*, says he: And if they did communicate, in what an Error was *Elias* then to believe, that by serving *Baal*, the *Israelites* had forsaken the Covenant of God?

What answer will M. *de Meaux* find for this Man? For the matter in question is not, whether the Church was preserved, or not preserved in

in *Judah* all this while; but which way those Seven thousand in *Israel* were preserved; this is the point he must answer to directly, without any shuffling, or wheeling about to the Church of *Judah*. M. *de Meaux* must tell him then in the first place, That men must acquiesce in the Word of God, without starting any nice scruples in opposition to it. That these two truths are manifestly declared in Scripture; first, That those men had not made an open separation, because *Elias* complains he was all alone; and then, that they did not communicate in the worship of the Idol, because God himself gives that testimony of them; There we must stick; and altho we do not apprehend which way they could without a separation, still keep their Consciences undefiled, these sort of doubts must not be indulged, nor questions put, that depend upon particular Circumstances, and every single Man's condition. He will answer in the second place, that if we search into the business throughly, it is not so very hard to conceive, how these persons might preserve themselves in the very midst of *Israels* corruptions; because it is highly probable, the worship of the true God was not utterly abolished among them, but only that of *Baal* superadded to it; *How long*, says *Elias* to this people, *will ye halt between two opinions?* Which plainly intimates, that they had joyned these two sorts of worship together. Thus then these Seven thousand might preserve themselves, by distinguishing the good from the evil, the clean from the unclean; and this distinction they made, according as their own condition, and the Circumstances of the times would allow, without pulling persecution upon their own heads from those of a Contrary opinion, by making an unseasonable bustle about the business. 1 King. 18.

This is to a tittle the reply we would make to M. *de Meaux* his question. Jesus Christ hath promised, that he will be with his Church, *always unto the end of the world*, and that *the gates of hell shall not prevail against her*, this we will hold to; and tho we could not resolve what methods he took to preserve his faithful, during all the disorders and corruptions of the latter Ages, yet we would not question in the least, but the thing was done some way or other; because we know very well, that he is able to do more than we are able to comprehend. So that we would look upon this as a question that did not at all concern us, because the knowledg of it depends upon an infinite number of particular and personal Circumstances, which no Man is bound to know. But then withal we shall tell him further, that the Corruption of the latter Ages did not consist in quite throwing off Christian Religion, or disclaiming it, but in the additions and mixtures, that were made of false Doctrines, and a false Worship with the true; and so we may with-

out any great difficulty apprehend, how the true Believers preſerved themſelves untainted in the midſt of thoſe corruptions. Now that was by having no ſhare in them, by ſeparating the evil from the good, by rejecting the one, and practiſing the other, and all this without any ſtir, or open buſtle, till ſuch time as there was a neceſſity that compelled them, or the glory of God manifeſtly called them to it; all the while living in hopes, that his good Providence would find out ſome courſe for it. If M. *de Meaux* thinks I advance a notion in this, that is impoſſible, I deſire he would pleaſe to acquaint us, what notion he hath of the Seven thouſand in *Elias* his time, that kept themſelves free from all the Corruptions of *Iſrael*.

Let us further, ſuppoſe a Man not fully ſatisfied about the Churches uninterrupted Succeſſion in *Judah*, during the horrible Corruptions introduced by *Achaz* and *Manaſſeh*, muſt not he put the very ſame Queſtion too? There muſt, to maintain this perpetual Succeſſion, be found ſome Faithful and Elect, for M. *de Meaux* hath told us, That the Elect are Eſſential to the Church; and conſequently, where we cannot ſuppoſe ſome Faithful and Elect to remain, neither can we ſuppoſe the continuance of a Church. Reſolve me then, which way theſe true Believers ſubſiſted there; did they communicate in all the Abominations of the Heathen, with which the Service of God was then filled? Or did they not communicate? For by M. *de Meaux*'s own Confeſſion, the Abominations of that time, did very far exceed all that had ever gone before. If they did not communicate, if they refuſed at all to partake in them, this was manifeſtly to ſeparate, which M. *de Meaux* hath himſelf aſſured us they never did. *Iſaiah*, ſays he, *who lived during all the Reign of* Ahaz, *for all theſe Abominations of the King, the Prieſt* Urijah, *and almoſt all the People, never ſeparated from the Communion of* Judah, *no more than did the reſt of the Prophets, who lived at the ſame time, and in all the other.* If they did communicate, in what an Error then was *Iſaias* himſelf, and after him *Jeremiah* and *Ezekiel*, to cry out ſo mightily againſt theſe Abominations, and ſuppoſe the People were guilty of mortal Sin againſt God, for joyning in ſuch Services as they joined in all the while themſelves? Whatever anſwer M. *de Meaux* ſhall think fit to return, I am ſure he will plead our Cauſe in it, and take off his own Objection. When he ſays, that the Prophets who reproved and abhorred the Impieties of that People, *did not ſeparate from the Communion*; I will deſire him to tell me, what pretence he can have for telling us here, that not communicating in the Sacrifice of the Maſs, and refuſing to receive the Euchariſt with them, was *manifeſtly to ſeparate?* For if the Errors and Idolatrous Worſhip of *Judah* might be *reproved and deteſted*, and yet no ſeparating in

Meaux's Eng. Conf. p. 16.

in the case; how comes it to pass, that men may not as well forbear to communicate in the Sacrifice of the Mass, and refuse to receive the Eucharist there, and yet not separate neither? When he tells us, *There was a continual Succession of Prophets, who instead of adhering to the Peoples Errors, or dissembling them, rose up against them with force.* If his meaning be, that there was a Body of Prophets, who always made open Profession, that they disallowed, and renounced the Peoples Errors; my answer must be, that his Assertion is utterly untrue. *The Priest and the Prophet have erred,* says *Isaiah*, *they err in Vision, they stumble in Judgment. The Lord hath poured out upon you the Spirit of deep sleep, he hath closed your Eyes, the Prophets and your Rulers, the Seers hath he covered. They said unto the Seers, See not; and to the Prophets, prophesy not unto us* right *things, but speak unto us* smooth *things, prophesy deceit. The Prophets,* says *Jeremiah*, *have prophesied by* Baal. *The house of* Israel *is ashamed, they, their Kings, their Princes, and their Priests, and their Prophets. Saying to a Stock, Thou art my Father; and to a Stone, Thou hast brought me forth. The Prophets prophesy falsly, and the Priests bear rule by their means, and my People love to have it so. From the least of them, even unto the greatest of them, every one is given unto Covetousness; and from the Prophet, even unto the Priest, every one dealeth falsly. Both Prophet and Priest are profane, yea in my house have I found their wickedness, saith the Lord. I have not sent these Prophets, yet they ran; I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. Thy Prophets have seen vain and foolish things for thee, and they have not discovered thine Iniquity to turn away thy Captivity, but have seen for thee false Burthens, and causes of Banishment. There is a conspiracy of Prophets in the midst thereof* (says Ezekiel) *like a roaring Lyon, ravening the Prey; they have devoured Souls. Their Prophets have daubed them with untempered Mortar, seeing Vanity, and divining Lyes.* M. *de Meaux* then is of necessity reduced to say, that there were from time to time some Prophets, who constantly cried out against their Corruptions; this is all he can say; and if this be sufficient to evince such a Subsistence of true Believers, as we are disputing about; we will tell him in like manner, that there were constantly some good Men, who from time to time had the courage to cry out against the Errors of *Rome*; and this he knows to be very true.

Meaux's Eng. Conf. p. 17, 18.

Isa. 28. 7.

29. 10.

30. 10.

Jer. 2. 8, 26, 27.

Ch. 5. 13.

Ch. 6. 13.

Jer. 23. 11, 21.

Lam. 2. 14.

Ezek. 22. 25, 28.

When he alledges, That *a great part of the People publickly followed these Prophets, as appears in that this impious Prince filled* Jerusalem *with Innocent Blood*: We shall reply, That he will not find any great part of the People followed those Prophets publickly at the time when they cried out against the Idolatries; nor that *Manasseh* shed any Blood upon this Occasion; the Scripture says no such thing. But he will find, that a very considerable part of the People did publickly follow those that cried out against the Errors of *Rome*, and that against these Persons it was they

Meaux's Eng. Conf. Pag. 18.

they raiſed Perſecutions; againſt theſe they ſent out Cruſades and Holy Wars, or againſt thoſe they ſet up Inquiſitions; and if there were no other Argument, but the ſhedding their Blood, required to prove the Exiſtence of thoſe Faithful we are debating of, the Church of *Rome* hath taken abundant care, that this Proof ſhould not be wanting. When he tells us, That *theſe Prophets, who confirmed their Miſſion by viſible Miracles, hindred the Corruption from gaining all; and whilſt a terrible Multitude, and perhaps the Groſs of the Synagogue was drawn unto Idolatry, they kept the Tradition of the Truth in the People of* Iſrael. We will deſire to know of him, whether he thinks thoſe Prophets had a ſufficient Call and Authority for oppoſing themſelves with all their might, againſt the Corruption of the times, tho they had wrought no Miracles. If he thinks they had, what does he throw in this word Miracles here for? But then we will tell him too, that thoſe who cried out againſt the Errors of *Rome*, did alſo hinder the Corruption from gaining all; and that whilſt a terrible Multitude, and the Groſs of the Prelates and Miniſters were drawn into Error, theſe kept the Tradition of the Truth in *Chriſtendom*. In a word, let M. *de Meaux* turn which way he pleaſe, we will bear him Company, and he ſhall not be able to take one ſtep in his, but we will in our Argument take the ſame.

Ibid.

Let him inform us, if he pleaſe, by what means he ſuppoſes it was, that the true Believers were preſerved in this ſame Jewiſh Church, before the coming of Jeſus Chriſt. The Superſtitions and Errors which Chriſt found ſo rife among them, did not all ſpring up in a Night; they were of an ancient ſtanding, and Chriſt himſelf calls them the *Traditions of the Elders*. They were publickly taught and practiced. What courſe did the Faithful take to ſecure themſelves from them? If they peremptorily refuſed to believe and partake in them; this M. *de Meaux* will tell you, was manifeſtly to ſeparate; and yet we take it for granted, that they did not ſeparate neither. If they might be tinctured with them, without any prejudice to the Salvation of their Souls, why then did Jeſus Chriſt give ſuch ſtrict and particular Charge to his Diſciples to beware of them, as of an ill Leaven? Or, what Reaſon had he for upbraiding the Scribes and Phariſees, with bringing over Proſelytes, and making them the Children of Hell, as well as themſelves?

M. *de Meaux* ſeems to have foreſeen this difficulty, and therefore he endeavoured to prevent it, by ſaying, That *the Doctors of the Law had many pernicious Maxims and Practices, which crept in, and got ground by little and little; they became common, but they were not paſſed into Doctrines of the Synagogue.* I beg the favour of all my Readers, that they would take very

Meaux's Eng. Conf. p. 19.

very particular notice of these Words, for they more than half decide the Controversy between us, and indeed within a very little make an utter end of it.

1. From henceforward, It is a judged Case between him and me, that it may so happen, that all this exterior Body, which he calls the Church, should be filled *with pernicious Maxims and Practices*; that they should get ground in it, and become common; for all this evidently appears to have come to pass, by that instance of the Jewish Church, as M. *de Meaux* acknowledges. Consequently then they must not think to impose upon us with a general Consent, nor a common Practice, as if these were things Infallible. The Church must be allowed to continue liable to Failings and Surprises; not only in respect of Practice, but in matters of Religion, *pernicious Maxims and Practices* both may get ground, and become common in it.

2. It will also be a concluded Point between him and me, That these *pernicious Maxims and Practices* may infect not the People only, or private Lay-persons, but the Body of the Ministry too, the Doctors of the Law, and the Gross of the Synagogue, as M. *de Meaux* expresses it, that they may get ground, and become common even among them, that is, they may be publickly taught, and have the advantage of being recommended by the Authority of those, to whom the guidance of the Church is committed; and consequently, the Ministry may by that means become very corrupt, and exceedingly perverse, not only in their manners, but even in the maxims of Religion.

3. It will be taken for granted between him and me, That this darkning, as well of the Church, as the Ministry, which disfigures the Face of it, and makes it difficult for men positively to determine, that God preserves his Faithful and Elect there, is not any *Chimæra* of the Protestants inventing; but that it is a thing which may, nay which actually hath come to pass. For, what can be said better of a Society, in which the *Doctors* retain a great many *pernicious Maxims and Practices*, which get ground, and become common there, than that it is a Church, whose Condition is very disorderly and confused?

4. It will once more be taken for granted on both sides, That these *pernicious Maxims and Practices*, may insensibly insinuate themselves into the Church and Ministry, or as M. *de Meaux* expresses it, *get ground, and become common*; without any great noise or bustle about them. Consequently, all the Wranglings we have had hitherto about insensible changes in the Church, have been very unjust and impertinent. M. *de Meaux* acknowledges a possibility of their happening in *Maxims* and *Practices* both, and even in such of both sorts as are *pernicious*.

5. We

5. We ſhall be fully agreed beſides, That, altho ſome *pernicious Maxims and Practices* do get ground, and become common; yet the Church and the Miniſtry do both ſubſiſt ſtill, and maintain an uninterrupted Succeſſion, ſo long as Salvation is ſtill in any ſort poſſible to be obtained in that Communion. From whence it follows, that we ought not to be charged, either with believing that the Church does at any time abſolutely ceaſe to exiſt, or with teaching, that the Miniſtry is ever perfectly extinct; all which they take occaſion to lay at our Door, from our ſaying, that both Church and Miniſtry have both of them been extremely corrupted. And M. *de Meaux* would do well to be the firſt Man, that leaves off urging this Accuſation againſt us.

6. He and I ſhall be further agreed, That notwithſtanding theſe *pernicious Maxims and Practices*, which get ground, and become common, as well in the Church, as the Miniſtry; God does ſtill continue to preſerve his Faithful and Elect there, ſome way or other; for ſuch there muſt have been ſtill under the Miniſtry of thoſe Doctors of the Law, or otherwiſe the Church muſt abſolutely have ceaſed. The Elect are *Eſſential* to the Church, as we have heard from M. *de Meaux*'s own mouth. So that he muſt not for the future pretend to call us to an account, for maintaining the Subſiſtence of true Believers, under a very corrupt Miniſtry before the Reformation; becauſe he himſelf allows the ſame thing under the *Jews* corrupt Miniſtry, before Chriſt's coming into the World.

7. We ſhall moreover agree, That what Method ſoever we may conceive God Almighty takes for the preſerving his Faithful and Elect in a corrupt Communion; yet this muſt always be effected by ſecuring them from that Corruption, and not ſuffering them to be infected by it. For there is not the leaſt likelihood, that either M. *de Meaux* or I ſhould imagine, that God brings them to Salvation by *pernicious Maxims and Practices*. The plain conſequence whereof is, that, altho men may be in a Communion, where there are ſuch pernicious Maxims and Practices, yet ſtill there may be ſome means found to ſecure themſelves from them, tho they be never ſo common, or have got never ſo much ground.

8. We muſt alſo of neceſſity agree, That what Miniſtry ſoever the Faithful live under, they are not only privileged, but obliged too to know, whether there be not ſome *pernicious Maxims and Practices* taught in it, and become common amongſt them. For, ſince this is a thing which may, and by M. *de Meaux*'s own Confeſſion, hath actually happened under the Legal Miniſtry; he is a wiſer Man than to deſire the

Faithful

Faithful should hazard their Salvation, by exposing themselves to the danger of following such *pernicious Maxims and Practices*. Whence it evidently follows, that they have a right of Examination, at least, so far as these Maxims and Practices are concern'd, which creep in by little and little, and become common, without being past into Doctrines. This is what M. *de Meaux* cannot possibly deny them.

9. Lastly, we shall also be agreed, that when a very great many of these *pernicious maxims and practices*, which have got ground, and are become common, do appear in the Church, that is, in the exterior society of professors, and in the Ministry; it were the highest piece of injustice that could be, not to acknowledg that a Reformation of abuses is in such a case necessary. *M. de Meaux* would not sure have Gods faithful and elect Children continue always in danger of being infected by these Errors. Now, from hence it follows, that our Fathers requiring a Reformation, as they did, was in this respect however, regular, and that they ought not to have been run down as they were, nor such offence took merely at the naming a Reformation.

Thus far you may easily discern a perfect agreement between *M. de Meaux* and me, because all these Articles are every one of them the natural and ineyitable consequences of that sentence, which I recited out of his Book. All the difference now left between us, may be reduced into this one enquiry; What we are to think of such things as have been *past into Doctrines*, that is, such as have been Canonically determined and appointed by an Authentick definitive sentence. Of these we may have an opportunity to say something hereafter; for the present we need only draw this Inference, That since by *M. de Meaux* his own Confession, men might secure themselves in the Communion of the Synagogue, from their *pernicious maxims and practices*, though they were become very *common*, and were by the Doctors and Ministers publickly taught, and recommended to the people; he ought not to think it strange in us, that we also think men might do the same thing before the Reformation, while continuing in Communion with those of the *Latin* Church, and living under their Ministry. The difference of things having, or having not been passed into Doctrine, does not in this case fall under our consideration at all. For the question is not now, what the Believers of right might do, but what it was really possible for them to do. Now there was no more difficulty in abstaining from the belief and practice of a thing that had actually been passed into a Doctrine, than there was in abstaining from the belief and practice of a thing which was taught by the Ministry, recommended by them, and was become common, though it had not been formally passed into a Doctrine. The Doctors of the Law

were every whit as zealous for their maxims, and practices, which they held by Tradition, as ever they of the *Latin* Church were, for the things past into Doctrines among them. The healing an infirm man, or plucking Ears of Corn to satisfie nature, upon the Sabbath-day, was accounted as great a crime among them, as it is among the *Latins* to work upon the Sunday.

But besides it is plain, that the greatest part of those things which we disapprove in the Communion of the Church of *Rome*, were not as yet *passed into Doctrines* before the Reformation. There had been no Canonical decisions given at that time, concerning Invocation of Saints, nor concerning worshipping their Relicks, nor concerning the worshipping of Images, nor concerning the number of the Seven Sacraments, nor concerning the use of Indulgences, nor the necessity of submitting to the Pope of *Rome*, and his See, nor in behalf of the merit of Good Works, nor for the proper and Propitiatory Sacrifice of the Mass, nor for the highest Adoration of the Host, nor for the making the Books, which we call the *Apocrypha*, Canonical Scripture; nor for Prayers in a Tongue which the people do not understand; nor for I know not how many Maxims and practices besides. The Doctors of the Law had espoused them, they had got ground, and advanced by little and little, they were become common, but they were not *passed into Doctrines*; so that the Faithful supposed by us to have lived under this Ministry, were in that respect in the very same condition with those, whom *M. de Meaux* supposes to have lived under the Doctors of the Synagogue.

I might here add another parallel instance of those Faithful, who as St. *Augustine* hath taught us, did live, and preserve themselves entire under the Ministry of the *Arrians*, without partaking at all in their Heresie. There was then a principal Doctrine in debate, and the most important of all Practices whatsoever, for the point in dispute was Jesus Christ's Divinity, and the paying him the Worship of *Latria*, which the *Arrian* Heresie had condemned. And yet St. *Augustine* assures us, that several in that Communion kept the true faith, and were not at all polluted with the impiety of their Ministers.

I might also observe, that before the Reformation there was such a general ignorance spread over the whole body of the Ministry, and that the Ministers of those times were so prodigiously careless of their flocks, that it cannot be a thing impossible to be conceived, that many people might live in Communion with them, and yet neither communicate in the Doctrines, nor corrupt practices among them. For, as for their Doctrines, they could scarce be imparted to the people; and when they were, it was after such a fashion, as was more likely to meet with a repulse

pulſe, than be able to ſeduce them. And for the practices, though they were common enough, yet they were not by a great deal ſo narrowly and ſcrupulouſly enquired into then, as they were afterwards, when the Reformation began to ſhew its head. And thus ſeveral things which were in their own nature exceeding bad, yet became accidentally of very auſpicious conſequence, and inſtrumental to the preſervation of the Church.

Object. 12. *They ſay, that theſe true Believers, who by their actual ſeparation compoſed the Reformation, were before ſeparated in their heart from the publick Idolatry. But firſt, this is not ſufficient: Secondly, 'tis not ſo.* *Meaux's* Eng. Reflect. p. 116.

Anſw. I do acknowledg that an inward ſeparation from any publick Idolatry would not be ſufficient in a man that ſtill continued to practice it outwardly as others do, becauſe this were a notorious hypocriſie. But if, when one is ſeparated inwardly in the heart, he ceaſe from the practice and outward acts of it, and if he be ready to make a publick and authentick denial to do ſo, when he ſhall be called thereunto by any neceſſity of declaring himſelf; I aſſert that this is enough in times of oppreſſion, ſuch as we ſuppoſe that to be, which preceded the Reformation. This was ſufficient for the faithful in the reign of *Ahab* and *Jezebel*, this was ſufficient for them before our Saviour's coming into the world, when living under the Miniſtry of the Doctors of the Law; this, if we may believe St. *Auguſtine*, was ſufficient for the Orthodox Chriſtians, under the Miniſtry of the *Arrian* Biſhops; and what reaſon then hath *M. de Meaux* to deny the ſufficiency of it, for thoſe that lived under the *Latin* Miniſtry before the Reformation?

The true believers (ſays *M. de Meaux*) *are according to Mr.* Claude, *thoſe who make profeſſion of the Truth, of Piety, of real Sanctity. Where then the profeſſion is wanting, there are neither true believers, nor a true Church.* I anſwer, that the true believers concerned in the preſent diſpute, did make profeſſion of the Truth, of Piety, and real Sanctity, in that they made profeſſion of the true Religion, the eſſence or ſubſtance whereof remained ſtill under the *Latin* Miniſtry, and in that they did not partake in the Errors, and the falſe additional ſervices put to it. And there was not any more expreſs profeſſion needful, either for the ſeven thouſand in *Elias* his time, or for thoſe others mentioned by me juſt now. Ibid.

But this is viſibly not ſo (ſays *M. de Meaux* again); *elſe, when* Luther *and* Zuinglius *appeared, their diſciples muſt have made this declaration, that they always had their heart averſe from the* Roman *faith; on the contrary, they are ſeen to ſpeak in all the Pages of their Books, as newly retired out of the darkneſs of the Papacy.* Ibid.

But is *M. de Meaux*, in good earnest, of opinion, that the Disciples of *Luther* and *Zuinglius* ought to have made formal declarations of all that they thought before the Reformation, and that these declarations ought to be inserted in Books, and so made publick? Will he not then believe, that there was any body since or before *Luther* and *Zuinglius* his time, that recognised the Abuses of *Rome*, unless they committed these very words to writing, *This is what we always believed, we always had our heart averse from the* Roman *faith, and from the Pope, and from his Bishops, and from the Real Presence, and from the Mass*? If all the world had been at that time strongly perswaded of the Holiness and Purity of the *Romish* Religion, how is it probable that the Reformation should ever have been desired and embraced with so much eagerness and zeal as it was; and that the people should be so mighty earnest in asking the Gospel of their Princes and Magistrates, as the story informs us they appeared? If all the world had been well satisfied with the *Romish* Doctrine and Worship, would there have been found, so many persons of Learning of *Luther*'s side, and Espousers of his Cause, as 'tis plain there were, and that they did this immediately, as soon as ever he shewed himself, as even our adversaries themselves agree they did? Wise and understanding men do not use to alter their opinions on the sudden, in matters of such consequence as Religion; and yet we know it to be very true, that almost all the great and eminent Scholars in *Germany*, and other places, were favourers of *Luther*, as soon as he began to preach and write against the Superstitions. This is plain matter of fact that cannot be disowned, and argues that the matter was in a very good disposition, that could be so soon wrought upon. And it signifies nothing to say that they spoke as *men newly retired out of the darkness of the Papacy*; for suppose them in what Circumstances you please, whether as lately undeceived, or as having been sensible of the abuses and errors for some time before, they might very well say, that God had brought them out of the midst of darkness, because he had brought them out of a Communion in which darkness was predominant.

Eng. Refl. p. 116, 117.

Object. 13. *But see here the entire ruin of the new Reformation. In the definition that Mr.* Claude *just now gave us of the true Church, he says, 'Tis the true Believers, who make profession of the Christian Truth under a Ministry which furnishes her with necessary Aliments, without depriving her of any one. If before the Reformation there was no such Church, the true Church, against Mr.* Claude's *supposition, no longer was; and if there was such a Church, where profession was made of the Truth, and which by her Ministry gave necessary aliments*

ments to the children of God, without depriving them of any one, what need was there of the pretended Reformed's Separation?

Answ. It is a marvellous thing that the wound *M. de Meaux* gives us, should be healed a great while before the blow was struck. Ten years ago did we get up out of this *pretended ruin*, that he pretends to crush and utterly overwhelm us with now. For this objection that had not then a being, was thus answered by me, as long since as the year 73, in the Defence of the Reformation against the Author of the Book of Prejudices. If it shall be objected, 'that our Fathers ought not to have 'undertaken the Reformation, but should have left things in the same 'condition they found them, and that upon this account, that supposing 'the *Latin* Church to have been in our opinion never so corrupt, yet still 'Salvation might be obtained in her Communion; I shall answer, that by 'the same reason the Orthodox Christians should never have entertained 'any thoughts of re-establishing the purity of Faith in the Church, nor 'of exterminating the *Arrian* Heresie, because granting the Church to be 'never so tainted with that Heresie, yet still there was room, and op-'portunities left, for working out mens Salvation in their Communion, 'and under the Ministry, as it stood at that time. If he say further, that 'our Fathers ought not however when they reformed themselves, to have 'separated from the rest, who were not for any Reformation, nor have 'deserted their Communion, and Congregations; I must reply again, 'that at this rate neither should the Orthodox believers, while they en-'deavoured to purge the Church of *Arrianism*, have separated however 'from those that were inclined to retain *Arrianism*; but should have con-'tinued with them in the same Communion, and have frequented the 'same Assemblies, which nevertheless it is plain they never did.

And a little afterwards, 'St. *Augustin* hath answered, That this is a 'most absurd objection. For 'tis every whit as absurd, as if a man should 'argue, that we must not go about to cure a sick person, because he is 'alive still, notwithstanding all his sicknesses; for 'tis just the same thing 'to pretend that we ought not to attempt at cleansing the Church and 'Ministry from some Heresie wherewith it is infected, because there 'are still some means of Salvation left for them that abide in her Com-'munion, and under her Ministry. That, on the contrary, it is our duty to 'employ our utmost endeavours for the setling Christianity in its beau-'ty and perfection, for fear the distemper grow upon us, and become 'past cure through too much carelesness, and least that part of the 'Church which as yet continues sound, be quite corrupted too by the 'spreading of the infection. Now this is exactly the Answer for our 'case.

'case. Our Fathers were obliged to do all they could, for the reform-'ing the *Latin* Church by their Exhortations, by their Writings, by 'their Sermons, by their good Example, because it is constantly a duty 'incumbent upon us to use our utmost endeavours, according as the 'Circumstances of the time, and our own abilities will permit, for the 'setling Religion in a state of Purity, for fear Errors and Superstitions 'should at long run become universal, and so the whole Church be lost 'through our lukewarmness. For, although Jesus Christ hath past his 'word, that it shall never perish, yet to neglect the proper means put 'into our hands for its preservation, is a tempting God, and making 'our selves unworthy of his favour; and so much the more so, because 'as far as it is possible for man to apprehend of the matter, there was no 'other means left but that of Reformation. Further still, St. *Augustin* 'answered, that in order to cleansing the Church from *Arrianism*, there 'was a necessary obligation upon men to separate from those that ob-'stinately persisted in Heresie; and that the inflexible stiffness they 'shewed for retaining their Error, was a sufficient warrant for men to 'withdraw from their assemblies. But our Answer is still of greater 'force than this, That when our Fathers were labouring to bring about 'the Reformation, they were obliged to forsake the Assemblies of those, 'who not only obstinately refused to reform with them, and who did 'all that ever they could to stifle and oppose the Reformation, but who 'went a great deal further, in attempting to impose upon mens Consci-'ences a new necessity of believing their opinions; and were so rigor-'ous, that they proceeded to Excommunication against all that refused 'to believe them. Thus did I without ever thinking of any such thing, labour before-hand to evade this *ruining* objection made by *M. de Meaux*; I shall say no more of it at present. Let us see now what care he takes afterwards to support it.

Eng. Refl. p. 117. Object. 14. *But it may be in teaching all these Doctrines, they had not yet thought of Excommunicating those that opposed them. Whence then come so many Anathema's against* Berengarius, *against the* Waldenses, *and* Albigenses, *against* John Wickliff, *and* John Huss, *and so many others, whom our Reformed will count amongst their Ancestors?*

Answ. I confess the Court of *Rome* had already given sufficient provocations to separate from her Communion, by her *Anathema's* against *Berengarius*, the *Waldenses* and *Albigenses*, against *John Wickliff*, and against *John Huss*, and by the Persecutions raised against them. By this means she had made a separation not only just and warrantable, but necessary,

and

and inevitable to all those that fell under the severities of her Crusades and Inquisitions, because she perfectly forced such to a Declaration. But still that there was no means left of obtaining Salvation under the *Latin* Ministry; and that all the world was reduced to an absolute and indispensable necessity of withdrawing from that Church, I utterly deny. The *Arrians*, who had delivered impious Determinations in their Councils, and filled both the Eastern and Western parts with most barbarous Persecutions, had given St. *Athanasius*, St. *Hilary*, and some others abundant occasion to separate from them, and hold distinct Assemblies. But that there was therefore no Salvation to be had under the *Arrian* Ministry; and that all men were reduced to such a streight, that they must of necessity either leave them, or be damned, is what St. *Augustin* never says, neither do we say it of the *Latin* Ministry. The Inquisition and Persecution did not at first put a Test upon all the World, there was still some Liberty left, provided Men could but content themselves with living quietly, and made no disturbance; and the Prelates, and other Clergy in those days were so well satisfied, if Men would but suffer them to live in ease and idleness, that they never gave themselves the trouble of a particular Scrutiny into Mens Hearts and Thoughts, nor of putting any constraint of communicating in their Mysteries, upon such as let them alone, and never provoked them with any Contradiction.

Besides too, as St. *Augustin* acknowledges, That a great part of the People were seduced by the Impostures of the *Arrians*, who yet retained a Christian simplicity, and acted according to the best of their knowledg; so there is no question to be made, but there were several such in this case. The wretched persecuted persons were represented to be the greatest Monsters in nature, and taxed with the horriblest crimes in the world; and while they were blackned with so many calumnies, and false imputations, very few people could be truly informed, what their belief and practices really were. Which very thing utterly evacuates the argument that *M. de Meaux* pretends to fetch from those Excommunications and Persecutions, because the Generality of the people being perfectly unacquainted with the true occasions of them, they could not produce their natural and proper effect.

We must put a mighty difference between a time of oppression, ignorance and general darkness, in which on one hand the mischief of the *Romish* Errors and Practices were not so fully disclosed, and on the other there was no opposite Communion to be found, into which the Faithful might incorporate themselves; and a time of clear light, of sufficient knowledg and liberty, when God had detected and exposed their Errors to publick view, and made them plain to all the world; and when

by the operation of his wonderful good Providence, he hath provided his Children with means of ſeparating from the Corruptions of the Age they live in, and a poſſibility of holding with joy and edification, an Evangelical Communion, that ſhall be free, pure, and not expoſed to any danger of corruption, from being engaged in common converſation, and concerned with Superſtitious perſons. In ſuch a time as the former of theſe, men are neceſſitated to continue in an impure Communion, they ſigh and lament the inconvenience, and intreat redreſs from Almighty God for it. But in ſuch a time as the ſecond, there is no continuing in ſuch a Communion, without betraying an affection for, and complacency in the impunities of it; or to ſpeak the ſofteſt that the thing will bear, without declaring that they prefer that before the purity of the Goſpel of Chriſt, which will always involve ſuch men in a great guilt.

And further, There is no queſtion, but God, whoſe Mercies are Infinite, would look upon ſuch a time as the firſt, with a more tender and indulgent Eye, than he would upon the ſecond; Becauſe the Obligation of ſeparating from thoſe Errors, was every day enhanced, and become more ſtrict by the acceſſion of light men had, and the diſcoveries that were made of their deformity; and conſequently, there was a ſtronger and more indiſpenſable neceſſity to live no longer under a Miniſtry, that teaches and practices ſuch Abuſes. This is what St. *Cyprian* acknowledges, upon occaſion of a Superſtition that had been long in uſe in *Africa*, not to put any Wine in the Chalice at the Euchariſt. * *If*, ſays he, *any of our Predeceſſors, either through Ignorance, or a ſincere miſapprehenſion, have not kept and obſerved what Jeſus Chriſt hath taught us, both by his Example and Authority; they may obtain a Pardon for it, by the mercy and favour of the Lord; but as for us, who have been particularly warned, and inſtructed by the Lord, this cannot be forgiven us.*

* Si quis de anteceſſoribus noſtris vel ignoranter, vel ſimpliciter, non hoc obſervavit, & tenuit; quod nos Dominus & exemplo, & magiſterio ſuo docuit, poteſt ſimplicitati ejus de indulgentia Domini venia concedi; nobis vero non poterit ignoſci, qui nunc a Domino admoniti, & inſtructi ſumus. *Cyprian. Epiſt.* 63.

Eng. Refl. p. 117.

Obj. 15. *But ſhould all this be true, the Affairs of the Reformation would not be a jot the better; ſince ſtill, before it had any Exiſtence, there muſt be acknowledged a Miniſtry, where without teaching, either that the Sinner is juſtified by Faith alone, and the ſole Imputation of Jeſus Chriſt's Juſtice; or that God in the* New Teſtament *abhors Sacrifices celebrated in a ſenſible matter, or that he alone would be invocated to the Excluſion of that inferior and ſubordinate Prayer, which is addreſſed to Saints; or in fine, without any of thoſe Articles which diſtinguiſh our Reformed from us, altho they place their Salvation in them;* they

they ceaſed not to furniſh the Children of God with all the Aliments neceſſary for the Spiritual Life, without depriving them of any one. *What has the Reformation wrought, if all theſe things are not neceſſary Aliments?*

Anſw. What we tell M. *de Meaux* now, That before the Reformation the Miniſtry did furniſh the Faithful with all things neceſſary for their Spiritual Life, is not any new thing. Theſe Gentlemen have been told as much a thouſand times over, and there was no need at all for repeating it ſo often here, or writing it in great Letters, and a different Character, to make People take more particular notice of it; for no Body, that I know of, hath any deſign to retract this Aſſertion. But we muſt add withal, what hath been told them a thouſand times too, that the ſame Miniſtry did with and amongſt theſe good aliments, diſpence a great many others not only inſipid, and of a very ill reliſh, but of qualities that were contrary to the Spiritual life. Thus it became a Miniſtry mixt of Good and Evil, like that of the Doctors of the Law, mentioned by M. *de Meaux* before, which retained a great many *pernicious Maxims and Practices*; like to that of the Scribes and Phariſees, who ſat in *Moſes*'s Chair, and yet taught abundance of falſe Doctrines. Now of this Mixture, ſome there were that took the bad part, and ſcarce any thing elſe, but utterly neglected the good; others choſe the good, and refuſed the bad. The firſt followed the corrupt Inclinations and Propenſity of Nature; the ſecond were guided by the Impulſes of Grace. And what can M. *de Meaux* pretend to find fault with, in all this?

He is concerned, that we do not reckon the Juſtification of a Sinner by Faith alone, and the Imputation of Chriſts Righteouſneſs, nor the Excluſion of Sacrifies in a ſenſible Matter, nor the Rejection of Prayers directed to Saints, nor the other Articles that diſtinguiſh us from the *Romaniſts*, among the Aliments neceſſary for Spiritual Life. But either he is in jeſt, when he talks at this rate; or elſe it is for want of due Obſervation. Excluſions were never called Aliments in this World; the advice that is given you to abſtain from a Poyſon that would prejudice your Health, can never be termed an Aliment. A Man is not nouriſhed, by cauſing him to abſtain from bad Meats; but his nouriſhment proceeds from being made to eat of good and wholeſome ones. There are two ſorts of Points in Religion, the one ſort are called *poſitive Points*, the other are called *negative* Ones; the firſt ſort contain all thoſe Doctrines that are neceſſary to be believed, and thoſe Duties that are to be practiced; the ſecond have relation only to the Errors that muſt be rejected, and

the ſinful Acts that muſt be avoided. Now in ſtrict and proper ſpeaking, they are the firſt of theſe that effect mens Salvation; and the buſineſs of the ſecond, is only to remove ſuch things as might obſtruct that Salvation. When a Man is going to any Place, his arrival at it, is not properly owing to the ſhunning of all the by-Roads that led another way, but to his keeping ſtraight on in that track that leads thither. So likewiſe our Salvation is not properly owing, to our diſclaiming all the Fopperies of the *Heathens*, the Extravagances of the *Jews*, or the Hereſies of *Neſtorius* and *Eutyches*, for the very *Atheiſts* do as much as this comes to; but we attain to it by following the Truths that are taught us by Jeſus Chriſt. So that when we ſpeak of *Aliments* to Spiritual Life, we do by that Expreſſion mean only ſuch Articles as are poſitive, and not the negative ones in the leaſt; and conſequently, when we ſay, That a Miniſtry furniſhes Men with all theſe neceſſary *Aliments*, this cannot in reaſon have any other Conſtruction put upon it, than what relates to thoſe poſitive Articles; eſpecially too, when we add moreover, that this Miniſtry mixes a great many bad and noxious Things, with thoſe good and wholſome Aliments, and that the Faithful diſtinguiſh betwixt the clean and the unclean in their uſe of them.

This diſtinction being thus premiſed, I ſay in the next place, That the ſeveral points M. *de Meaux* hath inſtanced in, and which we and the Church of *Rome* differ about, if conſidered with relation to us, are merely negative points. Juſtification by Faith alone, and by the ſole imputation of Jeſus Chriſt's Righteouſneſs, is held by us, as a point excluſive of Juſtification by the merit of mens own works. That there is not now under the New Teſtament any Sacrifice ſtrictly and properly ſo called, is alſo another, excluſive of the Sacrifice of the Maſs. The caſe is the ſame in our diſallowing the Invocation of Saints, denying Tranſubſtantiation and Real Preſence, rejecting Adoration of the Sacrament, the Worſhip of Images, Relicks, and the Croſs, the Doctrines of Purgatory, Prayers in an unknown Tongue, Communion unde one kind, the ſeat of Confeſſion, the Sacrament of Confirmation, and that other of Extreme Unction, with ſeveral others. Theſe are all in reſpect of us *Negative* points, which we do not call *Aliments*, for the reaſon I hinted before, that men are not ſaved by excluding and renouncing theſe Errors, but by Faith, and the practice of ſound Truths, and the Precepts of the Goſpel. We believe indeed, that the diſowning ſeveral of theſe points, is neceſſary in order to Salvation; but that is only upon the account that men are bound to remove all the obſtructions to their Salvation; and not upon a preſumption, that that removal of it ſelf can bring us into Covenant and Communion with

God.

God. For the *Jews* and *Turks*, who do not allow the greateſt part of them any room in their belief, are not for doing ſo, brought into this Communion. So that M. *de Meaux*'s Argument hath nothing of a ſolid foundation at the bottom.

Object. 16. *Perhaps theſe neceſſary Aliments muſt be reduced to the Apoſtles Creed, or in general to the Scripture. But the* Socinian *Church retains this Creed and this Scripture, ſo that the Miniſtry of a* Socinian *Church would, according to this Rule, have furniſht the Children of God with all the neceſſary Aliments, without depriving them of any one.* Eng. Refl. p. 117, 118

Anſw. We are not at all concerned to know what might be done under a *Socinian* Miniſtry, where men *are deprived* of the Articles of the Trinity, the Eternal Divinity of Jeſus Chriſt, his Satisfaction for the Salvation of the World, the perſonality of the Holy Ghoſt, His operation upon mens Souls in order to their Converſion, and ſome others of the like nature; ſo that this Communion hath ſcarce any thing in it that can be called Chriſtian, but barely the name. Our buſineſs is to enquire what might be done under the Miniſtry of the *Latin* Church, before the Reformation; and this is the point which M. *de Meaux* ſhould have kept cloſe to, without ſhifting the Cauſe, and running off to Hereticks, which hath no affinity at all with the caſe before us.

It is idle, and to no purpoſe for him to pretend, that they retain the Creed and Scripture, after he himſelf hath aſſured us, in the beginning of his Diſcourſe to *Mademoiſelle de Duras*, that *although the* Socinians *ſay with the mouth, I believe in Jeſus Chriſt, and in the Holy Ghoſt, yet there is reaſon to accuſe them of not believing theſe Articles, becauſe they believe them not as they ought, nor according to their true ſenſe.* *Meaux's* Eng. Conf. p. 2. The ſame thing is true concerning the Scripture, they only ſay with their mouth, that they retain it, whilſt they do really and in effect evacuate it by their forced and unnatural Expoſitions, which contradict the plain ſenſe of what is there delivered. It cannot therefore be urged upon this pretence, that their Miniſtry affords all *Aliments* that are neceſſary to our ſpiritual Life, without depriving men of any one, which yet we may and do affirm to have been done under the *Latin* Miniſtry.

Object. 17. *All would be reduced to liberty of Conſcience; and what Error ſoever is taught in the Miniſtry, provided they force none to follow their Deciſions, and ſuffer all contrary Doctrine, good or bad, 'tis enough to make Mr.* Claude *ſay, that the Miniſtry furniſhes the Children of God with all neceſſary Aliments, without depriving them of any one. But, according to this Pretention,* Eng. Refl. p. 118.

there would be no Society, whose Ministry should more furnish all necessary Aliments, than a Society of Socinians, *who brag, that they will not damn any one.*

Answ. It is by no means true, that all is reduced to Liberty of Conscience, because, besides that, we must suppose a Ministry furnishes men with all necessary Aliments to Spiritual Life, without depriving them of any one, which the *Socinian* Ministry does not do. And further yet, the Liberty used by the Faithful under the *Latin* Ministry, is quite another thing from that which the *Socinians* allow, when, as M. *de Meaux* tells us, they brag that they will not damn any one. This frees Mens Consciences from all fear of damnation, whatever belief they have, whether good or bad, orthodox or heretical. That, on the contrary, restrains the Conscience from evil, for fear of damnation, and fixes them to that which is good by a desire of Salvation. The first is a liberty of wickedness and impiety, making fundamental and essential points of Religion, to be only opinions in a manner arbitrary. The second is such a Liberty as is natural to the Conscience, that sets it at large from the Usurpation and Tyrannical Authority of Men, and subjects it only to the just and rightful Authority of God and his Truth. The first is a Liberty that destroys Religion and Conscience both, and almost subverts the Dominion of God over Mens Souls; for what is it less than subverting that dominion, to think, that no opinion, tho never so erronious, can damn any body? But the second is a liberty that prescribes due bounds to Consciences, and while it rescues them from the false bands of iniquity, leaves them still bound, and in subjection to the obedience of Jesus Christ and his Gospel. For a man to confound these two sorts of Liberty, as M. *de Meaux* does here, is not to distinguish between night and days; for the first is in effect a liberty of darkness, that discerns nothing, and represents all objects alike; and the second is a Liberty of light, that puts a difference between good and evil, prejudicial and profitable.

Ibid. Object. 18. *If it be said; amongst our Reformed, that a* Socinian *Church overthrows the foundation, by denying the Divinity of Jesus Christ; 'tis also said there, that 'twas no less overthrown before their Reformation, by the Idolatries, which, as they say, reigned every where.*

Answ. M. *de Meaux* does not make so good use of his Parts and Learning as he ought and might do. For there is a mighty difference between the *Socinians* and the *Latin* Ministry, taken in the Circumstances we suppose it in. The *Socinians* do formally and directly overthrow

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the foundation of Religion, which is the Eternal Divinity of Jesus Christ; and this they deny and oppose. The *Latin* Ministry did overthrow the foundation, not by formally denying it, for on the contrary they established and taught it; but by such superstructures and additions as hindred the effect of it; like the Doctors of the Law mentioned by M. *de Meaux*, that owned and taught the Law, but added *their own pernicious maxims and practices* to it; like the Scribes reproved by Jesus Christ, who taught *Moses*, but flung in the leaven of their own Doctrines besides; as the false Apostles in the Churches of *Galatia* did, that taught Jesus Christ, but imposed the observation of the *Mosaical* rites over and above. It was possible therefore, for Men under the *Latin* Ministry, as in these other cases, to separate betwixt the clean and the unclean, and by this means restore to the fundamental Doctrines, their genuine and proper efficacy. Under the *Socinian* Ministry this is impossible to be done.

Object. 19. *If they will, in fine, imagine, that 'tis more dangerous to destroy the foundation by subſtraction with the* Socinians, *than with the* Roman *Church by these pretended Additions, which they call Idolatry; besides all the Principles which we have just now shewn there according to the Principles of the Reformed, and even before their Reformation; it were an unheard-of extravagance to believe, that it would be more easy for these true Believers, who ought to make the distinction of Doctrines under a Ministry full of Errors, to cut off what is superfluous, than to supply what is defective; or that the Foundation of Faith is more certainly overthrown by diminishing than by adding; the Scripture having so often comprehended under one common malediction as well those that diminish, as those that add.* Eng. Refl. Page 118.

Anſ. It is a marvellous thing, that this Prelate will not see a thing so very plain to be discerned, as the difference there is between a Substraction and an Addition. I acknowledg both of them to be dangerous, both sinful and condemned by the Word of God; but does it follow from thence, that both of them are equally so? Or, that it is as easy to supply a defect, as to pare off a Superfluity? I am verily perswaded, that God will never suffer the whole body of the Christian Ministry to fall into *Socinianism*; so that, being men ought not to dispute upon idle suppositions made in the Air, I do not admit of this. But if such a dreadful unhappiness should come to pass, I aver, that the Faithful would be then obliged to withdraw from under this Ministry, and immediately of themselves, so far as lay in their power, to make other Ministers, according to that natural right belonging to the Christian Society, to have such an order.

For

For there is no enduring upon any terms under the guidance of Men, who have, without ever seeking to palliate the matter, declared open Hostility against the Eternal Divinity of the Son of God, his satisfaction for the Sins of the World, the Infiniteness of the Divine Nature, the Personality and Graces of the Holy Ghost; and who come nearer indeed to *Mahometism* than Christianity.

Now I am not of opinion, that the same assertion can be maintained of a Ministry corrupted by addition; and M. *de Meaux* must excuse me, if I tell him he blows hot and cold with the same breath. He affirms, Men have lived under the Ministry of the Doctors of the Law, who had introduced *many pernicious maxims and practices*. He tells us, *Jesus Christ himself honoured their Ministry; that he sent the Lepers to them, that he frequented the Temple, and reprehending the abuses, continued always joyned to the Communion of God's people, and the Order of the publick Ministry*; and yet now he employs all his vigour to maintain, that it was as difficult and dangerous to live under the *Latin* Ministry corrupted by addition, as it would be to live under the *Socinian*, which overthrows Religion, by taking away one of the principal foundations of it. Let him now tell us clearly and sincerely, whether he himself think Men might continue under a *Socinian* Ministry. If he do think so, 'tis unjust in him to alledg this instance, and foul disputing to argue from hence, that Men could not continue under the *Latin* Ministry as it was corrupted; and if he do not think so, he did ill to acknowledg that Men might, and actually did continue under the Ministry of the Scribes and Doctors of the Law. As Men continued then under the Ministry of those Doctors, because it afforded them still all necessary Aliments to Faith and Piety; and all that was needful to be done, was only to cast away their counterfeit additions, which is not a parallel case to that of the *Socinian* Ministry; exactly so did they continue under the Ministry of the *Latin* Communion, because that supplied them with all Aliments necessary for their spiritual Life; and all they had to do, was only to reject the Errors and false services that had been added to it; which is a thing that cannot be said of the *Socinian* Ministry. M. *de Meaux* is really very kind, he takes compassion upon us, and hath endeavoured to imitate our Lord, who binds up the wound he makes; who strikes, but heals withal.

Eng. Conf. p. 19.

Eng. Refl. p. 119.

Object. 20. *'Twould be better then for Mr.* Claude *to set aside all this Ministry, and the perpetual Visibility of the Church, and say, that 'tis in vain, sufficient, all this Visibility being overthrown, that God hath preserved the Holy Scripture, where the Faithful, whether concealed, or open; whether dispersed, or reunited; whether always subsisting, or sometimes wholy extinct, shall clearly find,*

find, according to his Principles, without any need of the Miniſtry, all neceſſary Aliments. For alſo of what uſe is a Miniſtry to them, in which Errors prevail?

M. *de Meaux* cannot have any juſt occaſion of complaint, if I go on in the ſame Road that he does. Wherefore then ſhould not he ſet aſide all that Miniſtry of the Doctors of the Law, and the perpetual Viſibility of the Jewiſh Church, to preſerve the Holy Scripture only? For of what uſe is a Miniſtry to him, that had introduced abundance of Superſtitions into the Religion and Worſhip? And what advantage can be made of theſe Doctors, who had a great many *pernicious Maxims and Practices?* Why would he have me ſet aſide that which he hath not diſdained to make uſe of himſelf, and which at the bottom is very true? Neither he nor I throw off the Scripture, when we maintain a corrupted Miniſtry, that furniſhes the Faithful with all neceſſary Aliments to Salvation; and ſuppoſe that the Faithful ſeparated between the Clean and the Unclean. Scripture was of uſe before the Coming of Chriſt, when the Doctors of the Law were in the Miniſtry; it was ſo, while he lived upon Earth, when the Scribes and Phariſees governed the Church; and it was ſo too, in the times of the *Latin* Miniſtry, before the Reformation.

Object. 21. *This is what the Proteſtants ſhould ſay, to avoid the Inconveniences into which we caſt them. But Mr.* Claude *neither durſt, nor ever will dare to do it; becauſe he would find in it Inconveniences yet more unſupportable, and more viſible. 'Tis, in a word, becauſe he found that by puſhing the Authority and Sufficiency, as I may ſo ſay, of Scripture, independently of all Eccleſiaſtical Miniſtry, they muſt at laſt deſtroy the Scripture it ſelf. In effect, he found in the Scripture, that the Scripture ought not to be as the Philoſophy of* Plato, *the Rule of a Republick in* Idæa, *but of a People always ſubſiſting, which this Scripture calls the* Church. *He hath found that this People ought to be always viſible on the Earth, ſince they ought not only to believe with the Heart, but alſo to confeſs with the Mouth; and to uſe his terms, make profeſſion of the Chriſtian Truth.* Ibid.

Anſw. It were to be wiſht, That M. *de Meaux* would be ſo civil, not to preſcribe Rules to us, nor to determine what we ought to do for the Defence of our Religion; and we for our own parts, can aſſure him already, that theſe pretended Inconveniences do not terrify us at all. The cauſe we aſſert, is like the Houſe In the Goſpel, againſt which the Floods beat, and the Winds blow to no purpoſe, becauſe it is founded upon a Rock. In the mean time, we may take notice, that he is now

obliged

obliged frankly to acknowledg himself mistaken, as to what our Opinions really are; and that in his Discourse to *Mademoiselle de Duras*, he hath all along supposed when speaking of us, not the Principles which indeed we do follow, but those which he fancied we should follow. He hath supposed, that we held the Church might be utterly extinct; and that we peremptorily and positively denied that she was always visible. And upon this supposal he makes what Remarks, and raises what Arguments he thought fit. Now he sees plainly that these two Suppositions of his are merely imaginary and groundless.

This is all that M. *de Meaux*'s Reflections upon my Answer to his Discourse contain, and all that he hath offered against it, with the least appearance of Argument, or any shadow of Difficulty in it. I have related his own Words faithfully, I have not in any place departed from his meaning; I have inserted no Additions of my own to his Expressions, nor stretcht them to signifie more than they should be extended; I have not omitted any thing that was worth my Consideration, and I have endeavoured all along to Answer directly to the Point, without any Shifts and Evasions, without Illusion or Equivocation. The Remainder which makes up the Conclusion of the Book, consisting only of a Discourse by way of Exhortation, falls of course, after what hath been [illegible] went before, and does not require any more particular [illegible].

So that now we must pass to the Conference and his Reflections, which have reference to that; in treating of which, we shall endeavour, as we have hitherto done, to give M. *de Meaux* all the Satisfaction he can in reason expect.

THE END.

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